

1507/39.

# COUNT DI NOVINI;

O. R,

*The Confederate Carthusians.*

NEAPOLITAN TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

---

• *How mystery and fraud confound the countenances !  
Quick, put on an honest face, if thou canst.*”

SHERIDAN'S Pizarro.

---

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY W. FOLDS,  
FOR P. WOGAN, J. BYRNE, W. PORTER,  
J. RICK, G. FOLINGSBY, J. STOCKDALE,  
AND W. FOLDS.

1800.

COINT NOV 11



THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

NATIONAL BANK

IN 1960 LETTERS

TO THE

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

LETTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

D A P I N

LETTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

LETTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

LETTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

LETTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

1710.10.12.100

# COUNT DI NOVINI;

OR,

*The Confederate Carthusians.*

## CHAR. XVI.

*Thus I clothe my naked villany,  
And seem a saint when most I play the devil.*

SHAKESPEARE.

NOVINI's first care, when able, was to visit that spot where the remains of his beloved Maddalena were deposited. He was accordingly conveyed to the chapel in the vicinity of the Carthusian convent. He was surprised to find that Marco had caused a magnificent mausoleum to be erected to the memory of his daughter. This tribute of affection was not, however, unpleasing to the count. He pressed the old man's hand with much warmth. — The scene forcibly reminding him of his own folly, and irreparable loss, he

leaned against the marble for support. A thousand instances of her affection rushed on his memory, and he yielded without reserve to his sorrow.

Tomaso, observing this, began to ponder on the means of diverting his master. Fortunately, the artist, whom Marco had entrusted with the monumental decorations, had placed a serpent below the figure intended to represent the deceased, either as an emblem of immortality, or of her having surmounted all the troubles of life. This attracted the curious domestic's notice, and unable to assign any reason for its situation, he, as usual, exclaimed aloud,

“ What can the serpent be placed there for ? ”

The word *serpent* caught the count. Remembering Maddalena’s mysterious exclamation—“ Dash that wily serpent from your bosom, lest it sting you to death ! ” he turned to Marco, and said,

“ Was this done at the desire of my dear Maddalena ? Did she ever mention any thing to you concerning secret enemies ? ”

“ Never ! never. Enemies ! Why, count son-in-law, my blessed daughter was too heavenly



heavenly not to make every one love her, at least those that saw her with my eyes. Oh, she is now safe from all enemies, corporeal and spiritual, a shining angel of light, singing Hallelujahs with the evangelist Mark, and all the holy saints, for evermore, amen !

“ But, Signore, said Tomaso, “ the good have always the most enemies, as might be easily proved. But I warrant you yourself have had enough experience of that. Even the blessed Mark was cruelly put to death by the heathenish Egyptians.”

“ True, true, good Tomaso. I wonder how that escaped my memory ; that is, if ever I knew it. You shew some sense, young man, when you speak proper things, and are not so curious about silly proofs and demonstrations.”

“ Silly ! Signore. I can soon demonstrate the wisdom, necessity, and usefulness of demonstration. Primo, When a man meets with an unknown fruit, and wishes to know whether it be palateable, the first step he takes is to put it into his mouth, the second to—”

The count giving signs of impatience, Tomaso added, with no little address,

“ Now about that serpent, the Signora, your daughter, warned my master against, perhaps you may owe the discovery of it to my curiosity, and the proofs you so much despise.”

“ How?” anxiously inquired Novini.

The honest domestic then related with great simplicity what he had seen of Niccolò’s conduct, which set the count on a deep musing, and caused Marco to exclaim,

“ I never liked that close-hooded monk. It is true, the last time I was with him, he behaved very kind to me; but, for all that, I have a good mind to give him his hairs back, the first time I see his face, I mean his hood. Odd so! I dare say he is coming this way.”

Marco was right. Niccolò, as if taking time to ascertain the prevailing dispositions of the company, slowly approached. Novini’s unusually cold salutation, and, above all, Tomaso’s conscious simpering countenance, convinced him the time was at length arrived to repel all injurious suspicions, by reciting the story which he and his

his confederate Lorenzo had fabricated to render Tomafo's information of no avail. Wishing not to appear too forward in his exculpation, after bestowing his benediction, he turned to the monument, and began, with apparent attention to peruse the eulogium on Maddalena's virtues.

“Yes, heavenly saint!” cried he, with hypocritical warmth, “this is indeed a just, though faint, tribute to thy perfections. It is only by following such a brilliant example that we can secure our peace, acquire the respect of all good men, and increase the glory of God.”

“How! father, increase the glory of God!” repeated Tomafo. “Prove how that can be, either by the rules of Logic or Aristotle? You said the other day at the altar, that God's glory was infinite, and I have heard my master, the great philosopher, say, that infinitude can receive no addition.”

Father Niccolo was rather disconcerted at this remark, but soon replied,

“I speak at present only after the manner of men.”

“Why,”

"Why," retorted Tomaso, "do you ever speak like an angel?"

He waited not for an answer, but ran off towards Bianca who with Beatrice was just coming up the aisles.

"Your servant has a very flippant tongue," said Niccolo.

"But a very honest heart," replied the count. "His disposition is as open as the day. An intimacy of years has added very little to the knowledge I acquired of his temper and habits on our first day's acquaintance."

"Truly, my son, I am rejoiced to hear his heart is not corrupted, as a recent occurrence caused me to suspect that he was heretically inclined, and dared to ridicule the holy ceremonies of the church."

"Blessed Mark forbid!" ejaculated Marco.

"On what are your suspicions founded?" inquired Novini.

"You, doubtless, know that I was called in to confess and absolve the departed saint, the ever-to-be-regretted Countess. Her attendants having quitted the room, I prepared to execute the awful office for the dying,

dying, but was prevented by her dropping into a slumber, which I wished not to disturb. Hoping the divine virtues of the holy crofs would ease her laborious breathings, and tranquillize her last moments, I placed it on her lips, and prayed for her speedy recovery. Unfortunately, while I was stooping, my hood, which avow compels me not to put off in the presence of any human being, fell on the bed, and startled the sleeping sufferer. Apprehensive that my vow might thus be involuntarily broken, I hastily replaced it and was proceeding with my sacred function, when a rustling at the door prevented me. Listening, I heard some disjointed words about *Sicilian charms*, and *Fortunatus's wishing-cap*, and soon after, in a louder tone, *What can be the reason of it?* Supposing this intended either to express doubts of the efficacy of the ceremonies of our holy church, or to ridicule, like the accursed Waldenses, the real presence in the sacred elements, I rushed into the passage, and found your servant Tomaso lurking, as I suspected, for no good purpose. Few words passed between us. I was then, and for some time after-

wards, inclined severely to question him concerning his faith, but the testimony of the present company to the innocence of his intentions has satisfied me, and I shall take no farther steps to bring the affair before the inquisitory tribunal."

Honest Marco, shuddering at the name of that dreadful court, here ventured humbly to inquire why he made a vow never fully to disclose his countenance in the presence of any spectator?"

"I was just going to relate it. You must know, my children, that, even when a boy, I had a decided predilection for the monastic life, and was emulous of rising to deeds worthy of canonization. In vain my family intreated me to forego my purpose, and held up to view the pleasures and power my family and personal attractions, for I was then accounted beautiful, might procure me on my entrance into the world. I despised every allurement, commenced my noviciate, and, at the expiration of the allotted period, instantly took the vows. I thought I had now baffled the designs of our arch enemy the devil. But, alas! if his attacks were less open, they

were not less dangerous to my virtue and repose. Ere I entered the convent, my youth had not exempted me from the advances of the forward fair, which, by the grace of God, I had sufficient fortitude to resist, and hoped that, when a friar's costume had rendered my attractions less conspicuous, nothing would intervene to draw my thoughts from heaven to earth. But how prone are mortals to deception! Impose it not to vanity, or credulity, when I assert, that many of those maidens, who crowded to the confessional, were actuated by far different motives than devotion or repentance. Their tender glances, their — but let me not wound your chaste ears by a repetition of their wantonness. Suffice it to say, that some were so lost to modesty, so powerfully possessed by the evil spirit of concupiscence, as openly to avow their unlawful attachment to my person. In this dreadful extremity, exposed to such great temptations, struggling with the frailties of human nature, and often on the brink of discomfiture, (for my heart was not insensible to the attractions of youth and beauty kneeling at my feet) what was I to do?

Desert my adopted course? No! that would have been inglorious, and, by preventing the salvation of miserable sinners, might have offered the enemy cause to triumph. After imploring the counsel of Heaven, I at length determined to retreat to another monastery, where my person was unknown, and took a solemn oath to keep my cowl closely drawn about my face until death. At present, indeed, I might without danger fully disclose my countenance to the most susceptible, as time and disease have, happily, left me only the shadow of my former self; but I am resolved to adhere to the very letter of my vow."

This artful story had the desired effect. Novini's suspicions vanished, and he could not forbear blaming himself for so readily adopting his domestic's inferences. As for Marco, he so much admired Niccolo's fortitude and self-denial, that he had looked upon him as a second Joseph, and was ready to kiss the hem of his garment.

Tomaso, in the mean time, entertained Beatrice and Bianca with a repetition of what had just passed between his master, Marco, and himself.

« Oh

“ Oh why,” said Beatrice, “ did you not sooner narrate this to my private ear ? ”

“ Private ear ! Signora. Which may that be ? ”

“ Oh, thou descendant of Midas ! much hast thou yet to learn. I mean you should have entrusted me with the secret. Then I might have given my poor nephew consolation and elucidation. Your retaining it so long in the inmost recesses of your breast, I do not wholly condemn, because, if I should hereafter honour you with my confidence, I shall expect similar inviolability.”

Tomaso, who, like Marco, sometimes suspected a little derangement of intellect, paid but slight attention to her harangue, so much was he occupied in perusing the high-flown panegyrics inscribed on the surrounding mementos of death.

“ Ha ! ” said he, “ surely none but saints are buried here. Wherever I turn I meet with tender husbands, affectionate wives, dutiful children, generous and humane masters. By the seven sciences ! it is no wonder my dear master and Vignolo com-

plain so of the wickedness of the world.  
Why the godly are all here.

“ La ! how oddly you talk ! ” said Bianca.

“ Yes, girl, his ideas are sometimes strange, very anomalous indeed, and likewise strikingly original. I believe I must cherish his mental faculties, sublime his ideas, and delight his imagination with a perusal of the enchanting Celia’s adventures.”

“ I am content with the enchanting Bianca,” whispered the gallant philosopher.

The fair composer was prevented from proceeding with her address, by Novini’s requiring Tomaso to assist him homewards. The party now retreated from the chapel, much more composed than when they first entered. Niccolo was, however, the most satisfied of the whole, and paid a silent tribute to his own talents in having so completely re-established himself in the good graces of his patron. Even the count, gratified by the discharge of his melancholy duty, seemed to have shaken off the spells of spleen, and to enjoy the beauties of

of Nature, with a liberal hand presented to his view. The mountains, half hid in obscurity, gave full play to the fancy, and their towering majesty was pleasingly contrasted by the humble elegance of the luxuriant plantations of vines and olives, enlivened by the huts of the peasantry, and the busy hum of contented industry. Vesuvius was still the most picturesque object of the landscape, but by long familiarity it had few attractions for the present observers, save when its internal commotions indicated an irruption. This now appeared to be the case. Suddenly a thick volume of smoke was ejected, which covered the top of the mountain; then, rolling down its sides, shot off obliquely to the clouds. Every eye was anxiously directed to the phenomenon. Marco, though naturally timid, was the least concerned of the party, having fortunately recollected that the miraculous image of St. Januarius, which had so long preserved Naples from the fiery torrent, still remained with outstretched arms at the foot of the tremendous volcano.

Tomaso,

Tomaso, after watching the column of smoke gradually fade into a mist-like hue, said to the count; with that familiarity which his close personal attendance made almost unavoidable,

“ I have often thought, Signore, what is the cause of the smoke and fire of that burning mountain. Some say it is the mouth of hell, but I wish they would demonstrate it *secundum artem*. The very ground we walk on sometimes sounds hollow under our feet, and makes me think of Sodom.”

“ This cannot be Sodom, though,” said Marco, “ being as how it is Naples.”

“ Right, my son,” replied Niccolo. “ But let us not inconvenience the noble Signore by loitering here. I dare say he will not choose to remain till his curious servant, not to give him a worse name, has found out the cause of the fire.”

“ Well, holy father, said Tomaso, piqued, “ that may not be impossible. I have been at the top of the mountain, and when I have discovered the reason of the fire — ”

“ Father

“ Father Niccolo,” added Beatrice, “ may chance to elucidate the cause of the smoke.”

“ By saint Mark !” said Marco, “ tho’ I know nothing of philosophy, I dare say I could do that myself. But really, holy father, I have sometimes wondered not a little, that is, very much, why this country, where every one is a Christian, and where there are so many churches, and relics, and nuns, should be so frightful and dangerous, when the devilish Mahometan Infidels live in the holy land flowing with milk and honey.”

“ That, my son, is one of the most striking proofs of the Almighty’s mercy and goodness to his faithful people. Happily for the salvation of our souls, we are placed near this most wonderful and awful work, that we may ever be mindful of Him, and prepared for our latter end. Other nations, as the vile Mahometans and Heathens, are left to the blind perverseness of their own hearts, without any warning of their danger. In short, my children, we must consider Vesuvius as a beacon, placed

placed by our Holy Mother to guard us from the rocks and shoals of iniquity."

Prove it, father!" cried Tomafo, "for I have heard Father Paul say ——"

His master's sudden exclamation, expressive of violent pain, here dispelled all his logic, and it was with great difficulty he kept him from sinking to the earth. Providentially they were near the castle, whither Novini was borne in a state of extreme languor.

"Oh God!" cried he, as he entered his chamber, "when shall my sufferings end? when shall I rejoin my dear Maddalena? Life, too surely, is a scene of illusion. From me the veil is torn. I behold its horrors, and am miserable!"

Beatrice now brought Laura to receive, before she went to rest, her father's sweet embrace. With a sigh for the miseries she might encounter in her progress through life, and an aspiration to Heaven for her protection, he pressed the child to his bosom. He then accepted his customary evening draught, and sleep soon afterwards calmed his sorrows.

As

As Beatrice withdrew, she met Tomaso, who respectfully inquired if his master was better. Being answered in the affirmative, he, without requiring a demonstration, was retreating with a less disconsolate countenance, when she hastily desired him to return.

“ Honest young man,” said she pomposly, “ inform me what objective sentiments you were going to utter in reply to Niccolo, when you were interrupted by my poor nephew’s instantaneous attack from the Fates? I was at first prepossessed with the idea that cruel Atropos was dividing his vital thread.”

“ Ah! Signora, it was, indeed, a dangerous stroke. How different he is from what I once knew him! One would almost think he was not the same man. Yet I cannot conceive how he can be any other. To be sure, I have heard of transmogrifications, and one Signor Ovid’s Metamorphoses, which my master used to read, says —”

“ You don’t reply to my interrogations,” said Beatrice.

“ Oh,

“ Oh, that’s true, about Niccolo. Ah, Signora, had it not been for my master’s sudden illness, I should have got the better of him in a twinkling. You know Niccolo said, that Vesuvius was placed there by the Virgin, to guard us from the rocks and shoals of iniquity: now I have heard both my masters say, and they were very learned men I assure you, it would have done your heart good to hear them talk Greek and Latin, that the mountain was there before the Virgin was born. From these data it follows, Primo, that the Virgin did not place it there; Secundo, that it could not be intended to warn us Christians from evil ways, when the heathenish Pagans had the benefit on’t many years before there were any Christians at all.”

“ I believe,” repeated Beatrice, “ your arguments would have preponderated against the monk’s.”

“ Aye, Signora, or I think I have puzzled my brains to very little purpose. Consider, I have lived ever since I was a boy with two great philosophers, and have assisted them in a vast variety of beautiful experiments, *secundum artem*. As for Father

ther Niccolo, he is not fit to hold a candle to them. Do you know he could not tell who invented eating!"

"Surprising!" Had our first paradisaical parents escaped his powers of reminiscence?"

"Oh, no. He maintained it was Adam. But I am almost certain it was not; for it is unnatural to suppose that the fish and fowl, which were created on the fifth day, would wait with hungry bellies till Adam had broken his fast. But I'll ask my master about it when he recovers."

"Do so. Its importance demands a serious examination. You, doubtless, remember I condescendingly proffered to sublime and elevate your understanding with a literary banquet. Ere Phœbus shall have thrice completed his daily career, I will give you a signal to attend me to those scenes of contemplation which purify the soul. Meantime, preserve secrecy. I now repent my having intimated that design in the presence of that forward girl Bianca, as it may give a loose to the voluble tongue, and point the envenomed stings, of flander. She is, however, thoughtless, and it may be

be already obliterated from the tablets of her memory. Do not, therefore, oh, faithful servant! renew the impression in inde-  
lible characters!"

" Tomaso, curious to learn whether the cause of her long and frequent visits to the western wing of the castle, was a taste for curious experiments, replied,

" To no living person, not even to my master, will I open my mouth about it. Father Paul used to call me *Hippocrates*.

Satisfied with this assurance, Beatrice then inquired concerning the appearance of mount Vesuvius. Being informed every alarming sign had ceased, she withdrew to her " seat of heavenly musing," to select a delicate morceau to prove the abilities of the uncultivated and unprejudiced critic. Her situation had been peculiarly irksome since the death of the countess, to whom, more from a desire of praise, than with a view of being benefited by her advice, she had frequently repeated her compositions. She found none of her friends could compensate her loss. Noyini was too ill and too impatient to listen with the requisite attention; Vignolo had often pronounced a severe

a severe philippic against whining love adventures ; and his wife was such a piece of still life as to reply only in monosyllables. In this dilemma, Tomaso's curious disposition attracted her notice.

“ His brain,” thought she, “ teems with ideas, and although some may be adapted only for the waters of Lethe, a few will surely serve to embellish my golden book, which ages hence shall flourish. And, as from the coarsest pebble, a skilful hand can extract sparks of light, so I, from his very absurdities, as they are not common place, but the overflowings of an original mind, may derive a few beams of light ethereal to grace my growing galaxy ! ”

## CHAP. XVII.

*His head well stor'd with subtle wiles.*

MILTON.

NO sooner had father Niccolo seen the count safe home, than he returned to the convent, and informed his confederate of his complete success in obviating the rising suspicions of his patron.

“ Truly,” replied Lorenzo, “ were it not for an internal monitor, I could almost disbelieve the existence of a presiding Providence, so much has our concealment been favoured by unexpected occurrences, and without which our detection had been unavoidable. Had not the confessor of the dear countess been suddenly indisposed at such a critical conjuncture, it would have been all over with us, as no motive could have prevented *him* from instantly revealing Maddalena’s dying injunction.”

“ That was indeed fortunate,” said Niccolo. “ Yet I still fear another cloud is forming for our destruction. Tomaso has, I think,

I think, long regarded me with a suspicious eye. God knows what he imagines or suspects ! But I apprehend more from his damned bustling, prying, inquisitive temper, than from any other person, unless, perhaps, Vignolo. As for the crazy old maid and her whining nephew, I think we are safe from their vigilance. I intend to procure Tomafo's discharge from the castle. It will, however, require some dexterous management, as the whole family are very much attached to him.

" Let him remain where he is," replied his companion. " Those of a peculiar bias can be much more easily managed than others. Ever ready to gratify their prevailing propensity, motives, of no attraction to uniform minds, will immediately direct every energy to one single object, which is sometimes followed with zeal, little short of insanity. Tomafo, like a charged gun, is ready for explosion ; others require loading. With what facility may we, if necessary, make his inquisitorial curiosity further our design ? He who is eager to pursue any glittering may soon be led astray by false lights. But really, Nic-

colo, I am almost weary of this manner of life ; so tame, so insipid, so trifling, and, in many respects, so opposite to my temper and principles. Besides, my nephew will now require my fostering care. He is become far too precious a charge for my old kinswoman's government. For his poor mother's sake, I shall protect him."

" So you incline to forsake a situation where no thoughts of to-morrow need disturb your tranquillity, where you devour the honey without the labour of collecting it, and where you may enjoy every pleasure."

" Yes, by stealth."

" So much the better. Secrecy and difficulty ever enhance our enjoyments. On the abbot's decease, I doubt not but one of us, through Novini's influence, will be appointed his successor. A sum, adequate for a noble independence in any place you or I may choose, may then be speedily accumulated. Meantime can you have a more eligible situation than the present for superintending your nephew's education ? You have leisure, a choice collection

of

of books, and may have assistants in every branch of learning."

" Do you then forget the odium which I am almost certain to incur by such a proceeding?"

" Trust to me," replied Niccolo, with a sneer, " for preserving your spotless immaculate character in all its purity. Rather than you shall be thought its father, I myself will claim it. Let the old nurse confign the child to our protection, and I hope, in a few days, to strike out a plan which will astonish you, and fully avenge your and mine own wrongs."

" Pr'ythee be less ambiguous. Till informed of the nature of your design, my nephew shall not be removed."

" Is your penetration then baffled? Listen to me, and be instructed. You cannot be ignorant of the count's ardent desire for a male heir. What then shall I merit, if I cause your nephew to be adopted as heir to the count's immense possessions? His death, it is probable, will soon give you an opportunity to confess your relationship, and perhaps to obtain the management of his ample domains."

“ The scheme, though difficult, appears practicable, and I shall have my hearty support,” said Lorenzo. “ Not only my interest, but justice itself requires it. But might not the same end be obtained by means less dishonourable? When assured Carlo is really his own child, Novini will surely be readier to perform a parent’s duty. His affection will also be more warm and permanent, than if he believe him wholly unconnected by the ties of kindred.”

“ Can you prove that he is?”

“ Beware what you say,” exclaimed Lorenzo, warmly. “ My sister was no wanton. Although seduced by vile unworthy arts, I have always considered her mind as inviolate.”

“ Ere you had presumed to censure, you should have heard my reasons for concealing, at least for a while, the real affinity of your nephew. As Novini, when attempting to compensate for former injuries, never, to my knowledge, inquired after your sister, you may be assured that he has ceased to esteem her, and that the child, by reviving its mother’s image and

his

his own crime, will sooner disgust than delight him. Recollect how very slight are the proofs of his amour? If he once imagines, and he is now become the mere creature of fancy, that you have taken the advantage of former events to impose a supposititious heir to his title and estates, you may chance to be punished instead of rewarded. He must have known that your sister bore a son, yet, in his confessions, and his repinings at the want of an heir, he has never noticed that circumstance. Can there be a stronger proof that he has ceased to think of her either with esteem or interest? You may, however, follow your own inclination; but, of this be assured, I shall not, in any manner, promote it: and, as you are in my power — — —

"Not more than you are in mine; remember that;" eagerly exclaimed Lorenzo.

Bitter recriminations, threatening a total rupture, now ensued, and continued for some time with great violence. Niccolo, who had most at issue, as will eventually appear, recollecting the consequences of losing his present character, deigned to make an apology. It was readily accepted;

cepted ; and Lorenzo, in return, conceded to the projected plan, though he fore-saw the improbability of Novini's yielding his inheritance to a stranger.

---

Early the following morning, Tomaso entered his master's chamber to inquire how he had rested. The count no sooner observed him than he said,

“ Are you come to contemplate how much man is the sport of fortune ? To behold how I am cursed with life ? ”

“ No, my dear master, not I ; as might soon be demonstrated. I am just come to see how you are, and help you to whatever you want.”

“ Help me to whatever I want ! Oh, what abuse of language ! Canst thou bid the sweet smiling days of spring return, invigorate my feeble limbs, restore the glow of health, or subdue the feelings of remorse ? Say, Tomaso, canst thou wake the dead ? ”

“ No, no, Signore. I don't pretend to that wisdom and science. Those things are possible only to the Almighty. Notbut

I have  
been

I have heard of the Infallible Elixir and the Philosopher's Stone."

"Then, why tantalize me with the idea of supplying my necessities? This is another, and not one of the least, of the evils of life. If our eyes should, happily, be shut to calamity, they will be forced open by officious and ignorant friendship."

"Ah, Signore, how much happier mankind would be if they know every thing; I mean complete masters of all the seven sciences!"

"No, Tomaso, if we knew every thing, conversation would lose even the few charms it now possesses. We should then see to the end of all things at once, and colloquial discourse, instead of affording instruction or amusement, would dwindle into mere declamation and endless repetition—Be assured, my good fellow, that wisdom yields far less enjoyment than ignorance. Care and anxiety are ever seated on the brow of Knowledge; while the broad laughter of Ignorance declares its happiness."

"I think, Signore, your little daughter is very happy."

"Perhaps

"Perhaps so; but, alas! her happiness will diminish as her years increase. Would to Heaven she were a boy! Vain wish! Felicity was not made for man, nor has he capacity for it."

"I must deny that position," said Vig-nolo, who, to Tomaso's great satisfaction, now entered. "My dear friend, you have surely overlooked one circumstance, which tends so powerfully to reconcile man to his situation, and to make him derive real benefit from apparent evils. I mean that disposition of mind which causes us to turn our very defects and calamities into the means of completing our course with honour. Were we to regard our own deformities and afflictions in the same light as others, our situation would be deplorable indeed. But if a man is tall, he dwells on the advantages of lofty stature or grandeur of mien; if low, on agility and grace. Nay, those who are distinguished by such glaring imperfections, as will not admit of the varnish of self-deception, still plume themselves, and often with reason, on some other endowment which they believe more

more than counterbalances every other failing."

"Is this argument?" replied the count.  
"Ought the contemptible enjoyment arising from pride, delusion, and self-conceit to be deemed rational happiness? Alas! it is unworthy of the name. As well might a bloated limb be styled stout and healthy, because it is plump."

Beatrice, fearing that Tomaso would reveal the subject of their late conference, and expose her to Vignolo's irony, now beckoned him out, to renew her injunctions of secrecy. Promising implicit obedience, he retired into the open air, deeply ruminating on what he had just heard. His master's declaration, that ignorance was ever smiling, dwelt strongly on his memory; and as he was conscious of his own wisdom, and considerably affected by Novini's gloomy explanations, his countenance was very sad and philosophical. With a slow and solemn pace, his eyes intently fixed on the ground, he entered the garden. Bianca, who had attentively observed her favourite's motions, now left

the

the house, stole softly behind him, and clapped the philosopher on the shoulder.

“ What are you studying now ? ” said she, laughing. “ Why you walk no faster than a snail. Mercy on us ! have you got the tooth-ach ? Your lively aspect is clouded with melancholy.”

“ Well, Bianca, it then proves the truth of my master’s declaration, that ‘ care and anxiety are ever seated on the brow of Knowledge.’ ”

“ Oh ! your humble servant. Truly, if wisdom lies in a sour face, you are a very great philosopher. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

“ Ah, Bianca ! Bianca ! How can you be so merry in this poor miserable world ? ”

“ Why not ? Would you have me shut up my mouth till I get into a better ? ”

“ Leave off that jesting way. Consider, as my master says, that life is without enjoyment, without one single particle of happiness ? In this transitory state, there is nothing good.”

“ La ! Tomaso, how can you say so ? Mere,” added she, taking a choice lime from a tree, “ taste this, and confess the world yet contains something good ; or if your

your wisdom prefers a cluster of nice grapes, I humbly intreat your wisdom to accept of it."

"What are these to me?" said Tomaso, as he received the fruit. "They may be good in themselves, as I have heard the count say a hundred times, but still, as connected with other things, they may be evil. Ignorant persons, he says, are content with the present, and do not, like us philosophers, look forward to consequences, and proofs, and demonstrations. The clusters of grapes, for instance, may please the unreflecting, but ah, my fair maid, what dreadful effects may spring from their juice! Besides, who knows whether all these things will be here to-morrow?"

"So much the better. I'm sure, my master ought to be ashamed of himself to put such nonsensical stuff into your head. It is not like a good Christian to be always grumbling. For my part, I love to sing all day long."

"That's owing to ignorance, Bianca. The count is a very sensible man and a great scholar. He also knows all the learn-

ed

ed lingsos, and can make experiments ; so it is but reasonable he should know better than you about the troubles of life."

" Troubles of fiddlesticks ! But why should you use my poor master's complaints, when your cases are not alike. It would be just as proper for you to swallow his physic, because he understands the learned lingsos, as you call them."

" Well, Bianca, as I intend to convince you before we part, I think we had better sit in the arbour. It will be more cooling and pleasant."

" Pleasant !" retorted his lively antagonist. " Pleasant ! Alas ! there is nothing pleasant in this miserable world."

" I mean," added Tomaso, somewhat confused, " that we may as well sit there as not."

" Aye, and as well sing all day as cry."

" Don't cross me in that manner," replied he, " or you will drive some nice arguments, *ad hominem*, out of my head."

" Then it will be the freer from rubbish."

The arbour, at which they now arrived, though so closely interwoven with sweet branches

branches as to exclude the direct rays of the sun, yet, in several parts, it admitted a prospect of various objects in the landscape. The amenity of the place, and the company of Bianca, restored the honest domestic's natural hilarity.

"Oh," said he, in the fulness of his heart, "this is really a nice snug place. What a fine sweet breeze blows from yonder bed of flowers!"

"Aye, very true," returned Bianca, with an arch smile. "But, alas! who knows whether they will be here to-morrow?"

Piqued by her manner, and desirous of retrieving his expiring cause, Tomaso began to rummage every corner of his pericranium for a few arguments *ad hominem*; but finding none suitable, and being unwilling to remain silent, he exclaimed,

"For shame! for shame! to jest about so serious a truth. Would you but reflect and make distinctions, like my master, you would find that every thing is changeable and uncertain in this unhappy world."

"Then you were only joking, when you said that your love for me should last for ever?"

"Really

“Really, Bianca, you are a bad reasoner. I dare say, you know nothing about Logic and Aristotle, or Plato and Archimedes.”

“And what the worse am I for that? I wish only that you had kept clear of such a gang.”

“There it is now. Nay, I question if you ever made an experiment, *secundum artem*, in any one of the seven sciences. Had you learned to make distinctions, you might have known that affections of the soul, such as love, last far longer than the most admired qualities of the body, as might soon be proved by a fine train of minors, and majors, and conclusums. For, ah, fair maid! time will soon deface your brown locks, your bright eyes, your rosy cheeks, your sweet lips.” Our man of science here gave her a hearty kiss.

“Be quiet,” exclaimed Bianca. “You grow rude! You are a fine philosopher, indeed! Would a wise man behave so?”

“To be sure he would, as I will prove and demonstrate. Primo, a wise man wishes to avoid falsehood. There’s my proposition. But how can he avoid it, unless

unless he ascertain the truth? That's what we call the major. No, faith! I believe 'tis the minor; however that may be, this is the syllogistic conclusum. A wise man's sight may demonstrate that your cheeks are rosy, and your eyes bright, but how can he truly say your lips are sweet, till he has made the experiment. *Probatum est.*"

"Experiment! Truly you're a fine experimenter. But my mistress Beatrice says, "A maid must not yield to such freedoms from any man, till Hynien has made them one."

"Aye, but when will that happy day come?"

"Happy day!" repeated his companion, breaking from him, "Happy day! Oh, what a sorry reasoner you must be. Had you learned to make distinctions, you would have known that there are no happy days in this miserable world. There's my conclusum. Ha! ha! ha!"

She now ran merrily off, leaving Tomaso in great confusion at being thus baffled by a woman.

"What

“ What a sensible girl she is ! ” he, at length, exclaimed. “ And yet she knows neither Greek, nor Latin, nor astronomy, nor mathematics, nor yet has she made experiments as I have. After all, my master may be wrong. I wish I had staid to hear Vignolo’s logic. It was not fair though for Bianca to run away. Perhaps, indeed, she dreaded I would get her between the horns of a dilemma, as my master used to say. If so, running away is the greatest proof of her wisdom. But when marriage has made us one, we’ll both be the better for it ; as her wisdom will be mine, and mine will be hers. As for her folly, she may keep that to herself, since I have little to give her in exchange. Besides, a man should have the upper hand of a woman. I wonder what Madam Beatrice can want with me. Whatever it may be, I warrant I’ll get the better of her ; because I shall not be put into such a flutter by her beauty, nor derange my minors and majors by touching her lips.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Is it true? Oh! for certainty, though but for a moment!*

*Is it true? Am I deceived? Am I? Is it true?*

SCHILLER.

NICCOLO, the morning after his conference with Lorenzo, went to the castle, more with the view of leading the count to a ready compliance with their plan relative to adoption, than of inquiring after the health of his patron, or administering spiritual comfort. He arrived a few minutes after the departure of Vignolo, whose arguments had somewhat cheered his friend's drooping spirits.—Finding Novini engaged with his charming daughter, the artful priest feared her attractions would prove an unsurmountable obstacle to any design prejudicial to her interests.

“ I am glad, my son, to see you thus employed,” said he, with a dissimulating smile. “ Our Blessed Mother has hearkened to my prayers, and, I trust, given you assurance

assurance of yet enjoying many years of happiness."

" Alas ! reverend father, you well know that my portion in this life is not to enjoy but to suffer. Even when I look to the next—"

" There," interrupted Niccolo, " you must place your trust in the church. Eternal happiness surely awaits her liberal and faithful servants." Then, as if struck with admiration at Laura's alertness in pursuing a young bird which Tomaso had given her, he added—" What a charming lively child ! She has the spirits and activity of a boy."

" Oh, that she were really such ! My name should not then become extinct, nor my inheritance devolve to a stranger. Ever, ever thus, are sanguine wishes disappointed !"

" Cease, my son, to arraign the dispensations of Heaven. It is more befitting a man of wisdom to look abroad for a remedy."

" Remedy, in this case, there can be none. My heart can never own another love.

love. Even if that were possible, my situation would preclude the indulgence."

" In this exigency," replied Niccolo, eager to introduce his favourite object, " there is, however, a middle path which the first characters of antiquity disdained not to follow, nor is the practice rare even in these Christian times. I mean adoption."

" Of that I never once thought."

" You surprise me! Is it possible that you have overlooked its many and singular advantages? Should your child have received from nature a disposition inimical to virtue, education, and even your own example, may be found a feeble barrier to vice. But, in the case of adoption, you may cast your eye over thousands and elect one, whose aspirations are virtuous, whose natural talents evince genius, and whose situation exposes him to the oppression of vice or the seductions of heresy, to all the rights of heirship. These will be considered as arising solely from your goodness, and inspire the warmest sentiments of gratitude. But how often, my son, do children, presuming on their affinity, boldly demand indulgence

indulgence and protection, resent every trifling omission, and grow overbearing and undutiful. Thinking parental favours are derived from right, custom, or indiscriminate affection, children are apt to receive them with unthankful hearts."

" That is very true," said Novini, who had listened with considerable interest. " I never considered it in the proper point of view. But it is not now too late."

" Your observation, my son, is very just. The king will not hesitate to grant his consent. How great will be your satisfaction, should you prove the blessed instrument of snatching a human creature from perdition, and of placing it in the path which leads to a blissful eternity! May not your own eternal happiness be insured by an act so god-like?"

These arguments, particularly the last, determined Novini, his long illness having sunk him deeper into superstition, rendered him a prey to false terrors, and frequently led him, when more than usually melancholy, to doubt of his own salvation. A new object was also presented to stimulate his dormant curiosity, and enliven his existence.

istence. He accordingly expressed his entire acquiescence in the design, but hinted his intention of soliciting Vignolo's advice. This was not altogether pleasing to Niccolò. Only from that quarter he expected opposition. Not daring, however, to object to it, he turned to Laura, who, with that innocent gaiety so pleasing in children, still continued playing on the floor, and began to converse on the likeness of children to their parents.

"I am sorry that Laura does not resemble you," said he, "malignantly."

"Sorry! Why so, reverend father?"

"Nay, my son, why that look of anxiety? I only spoke agreeable to the common remark, that a daughter who resembles her father is sure to be fortunate. I hope you are not like our credulous neighbours, the Calabrians. With them it is a deep-rooted notion that every child, whose mother has been faithful to the nuptial vow, must resemble its father, who, if persuaded it did not, would believe the poor child a bastard."

This address increased Novini's uneasiness. During his unfortunate expedition to

to Otranto, he had heard of that opinion, and now concluded that so general a belief might be founded on some unknown law of nature. Impressed with this idea, he desired Niccolò to reach him a small mirror, and was obeyed with the greatest alacrity. Now observing his own, then scrutinizing his daughter's features, he spent a considerable time in perfect silence.

" You are right, holy father," said he at length, with a sigh. " I can discern no likeness."

" Then, I trust, you are now convinced how apt the ignorant are to adopt erroneous opinions, as there can be no doubt of the virtue of your late lovely partner. You have a much greater assurance of her fidelity than several of our Neapolitan nobles can boast, as Laura, I understand, was not born till some years after your marriage. But had the countess, only seven or eight months after that event, presented you with a child, your suspicions might then be warranted by some small degree of probability."

This harangue, but more especially the words *only seven or eight months after that event,*

event, struck the count with such dismay, that he could hardly breathe. He recollects that Laura's birth was nearly in a similar predicament, she having been born when he had been about eight months absent. He instantly related every circumstance, not omitting Marco's painful pilgrimage, to Niccolo, who listened with as much attention, and expressed as much surprize, as if to him it was wholly unknown. Having, as he thought, made a very successful beginning, and given Novini's morbid fancy sufficient materials to work upon, he now treated the subject in a less serious manner.

" My son," said he, " you remind me of a curious story. In Naples there lived, a few years ago, a person of a respectable family, but somewhat past the meridian of life, who, from the natural desire of leaving his name behind him, married a lady much younger than himself. Three years passed away, but no male heir crowned his sanguine expectations. He then, by his wife's desire, undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, fully expecting to be blessed with a boy on his return. Nor was he disappointed.

disappointed. So many difficulties he encountered on his journey, that he did not arrive at Naples till his faithful spouse was suckling her second son. Ha! ha! ha!"

The count's ghastly smile, at this facetious narrative, convinced the disingenuous friar that the poison had begun to operate. When he had performed his ministerial duty, Niccolo hastened to his confederate to re-consult on the means of finishing what appeared to have been so successfully commenced.—As soon as Niccolo departed, Novini sunk into a melancholy meditation, during which every faculty of his soul was on the stretch. The more he thought, the more were the pernicious ideas, suggested by the monk, strengthened.

"Is it then possible," thought he, "that I have been so grossly deceived? Have Maddalena's modesty, simplicity, and affection been assumed for the purpose of raising a blind and fatal confidence? No, it surely could not be. Yet man, in this unhappy scene of things, is ever prone to deception. When wrapt in fancied security, and exulting in his strength, he is levelled with the dust! I was the chosen ob-

ject of her heart. Since our union, she has voluntarily lived in retirement. Rizambo was my only rival, and no dangerous one. But he has long ceased to be an object of apprehension. As to Vignolo, her only male acquaintance for some years past, his religion, his conjugal love, his friendship, would prevent his injuring me in that tender point. The watchful eye of his partner, and Beatrice, would likewise be some security. Besides, would he have endeavoured to restrain my excursion to Otranto, when my absence was so favourable to a licentious intercourse? No! he must be acquitted of any design against my honour. But why, when my presence was thought necessary to Maddalena's happiness, and when my desire of an heir was known to be so strong, was her pregnancy hid from me? That would have instantly drawn me to the quiet of a domestic life, and I should not now appear a melancholy spectacle. This concealment surely implied something wrong. Ha! is it not probable that remorse occasioned her illness? Perhaps compunction visited her in her last moments, and she intended to confess and

implore pardon for the injuries she had done me. Yes, yes, it is more than probable. Even now her words, *Dash that wily serpent from your bosom ere it sting you to death, ring in my ear.* Oh that I were once assured Laura was not my daughter, I would instantly adopt an heir. My estate should never nourish the fruit of infidelity. I wish Vignolo were returned."

In this manner he tormented himself with groundless suspicions, and from this time his affection for his daughter seemed to abate. It was not long ere he had an opportunity of pouring into the ear of friendship this additional cause of affliction. Vignolo listened with surprise and compassion to his complaints. Tracing the whole to the hints furnished by Niccolo, he wished he had it in his power to remove him from the neighbourhood; but he was at a loss to conjecture what interest he could have in raising such suspicions. Taking a view of Maddalena's conduct, he represented her exemplary patience under neglect, her tender and unremitting attention since his misfortune, in such striking colours, as considerably abated Novini's fears.

" Did

" Did she not," added he, " acquire the love of all who knew her? Do not the very servants adore her memory? Was she not exact in the performance of her religious duties? Is it then possible that one, studiously attentive to the lesser virtues, should at once forfeit her claim to respect, break loose from the wholesome restraints of our holy religion, and incur the enormous guilt of adultery? No! Credulity herself must assent to the impossibility. If the concealment of her pregnancy from you be blame-worthy, it devolves on your own head. She dreaded giving rise to hopes which so many accidents might disappoint, and expected a joyful surprise would act more powerfully towards restraining you in the paths of domestic life, than your awaiting the uncertain result."

" But her last words," interrupted the count. " To what did they allude? You must allow they were extraordinary!"

" Time, my dear friend, may elucidate them; though it is probable they were only the effect of delirium."

The count apparently acquiesced in that possibility; and then ventured to mention

his design of adoption, which, he said, should not be detrimental to his daughter's interests. Vignolo was greatly surprised at this whim, and grieved to find Niccolo's influence was still more extensive than he had suspected. He attempted to persuade his friend to relinquish this hastily-formed design, but finding him resolute, thought proper to desist. He was also not without hopes that accident, or the difficulties of selection, might effect a change in his determination. Another powerful motive was, that Novini, when favoured with a transient return of his former sanguine humour, had projected a match between Laura and his son Henri; any opposition, therefore, to the plan, might be imputed to self-interest.

Pleased with having obtained his friend's consent, Novini became more tranquil. In hopes of obtaining one worthy of the intended honour, he now meditated on the families and characters of his acquaintance; but those whose age and disposition corresponded with his ideas of fitness, had parents fully intitled to their affection, and  
who

who would not rend the parental tie from any motive whatsoever.

“ No,” said he to Vignolo, “ some poor destitute orphan, one, if possible, without a relation in the world, shall be my choice. Then, no claim whatever can lessen the grateful affection which my kindness must raise in his bosom. It would also be more desirable, if he were descended from a noble and virtuous ancestry, as I have often thought that low and vicious parents produce children naturally corrupt.”

“ The task of discovering one to your mind will be difficult,” said Vignolo, “ but that will render the acquisition only more valuable. I should also advise you to trust to chance for presenting a fit object for your benevolence, as your researches may call forth the offers and counsel of persons interested in deceiving you. Secrecy must insure success.”

To this the count acceded. Renewing his arguments in favour of Maddalena’s innocence, and pourtraying with a bold pencil the danger and sin of yielding to such injurious suspicions, Vignolo returned to his own domestic circle, where all

his

his joys centered. His hope was now more sanguine that the peculiar circumstances required to concur in the plan of adoption, would so long retard it, that the count's ardour would cease, and the design be at length forgotten, or rejected for some other less reprehensible.

Niccolo and his confederate, as if they had foreseen the result of Vignolo's conference, had already placed those springs in motion which promised to insure them success.

"It being of great importance," said the arch deceiver to Lorenzo, "that the credulous Novini's ardour to forward our design should not have time to cool, I think you had better set out to-morrow morning. I cannot help laughing to see with what ease I can now regulate every motion of the once-haughty count. Oh he is an admirable subject to work upon!"

"I fear," replied Lorenzo, "I shall not find it so easy to persuade my poor aunt to resign her precious charge. Perhaps she would yield more readily to your persuasive powers?"

"I would not go for the world," said Niccolo, with unaccountable emotion.

"Suppose

“ Suppose then I bring her to you? She will hardly consent to a separation from Carlo.”

“ By no means bring her to this neighbourhood. The garrulity of age, and even her affection, will be dangerous to our plan, and deprive him of the advantages to which his birth entitles him. So far from this, as a transient visit to see her charge may be equally fatal, you had better induce her to believe you have left your present situation, or convey your nephew away without her knowledge.”

“ No, Niccolo, to that I shall never agree. Poor woman! she affectionately received us when all others scornfully repelled us. To my beloved sister, and myself, she was as a parent. The sudden loss of her dear Carlo, the only enlivener of the solitude of age, the sole object of her love, would break her heart.”

“ That, indeed, might insure our safety.”

“ Away with the idea! No! trust me, Niccolo, I am not yet wholly lost to principle. Gratitude is not yet banished from my breast. I will inform her of the necessity of a separation, and point out its advantages.

vantages. By promising she shall see him again, and allowing her the means of spending the remainder of her days with greater satisfaction, I hope to reconcile her to his departure."

" Well, well, do as you please. You know the consequences of a premature discovery, and that a thread, finely spun, may be easily broken. May it not, however, be necessary, as your nephew will now be capable of observation, to adopt some means to prevent his recognizing you as his former benefactor?"

" Faith, nothing escapes you. But from him we have nothing to fear ; since, to avoid the scandal my frequent visits to the infant might draw upon our order, I have always entered the village in a lay habit. Carlo must therefore possess premature sagacity, if he discover me in my present transformation.

" I hope he will not. Be however cautious ; though, indeed, as only you and yours will be benefitted by success, my advice seems unnecessary. I am only a spectator."

" On

“ On that account I wonder at your present eagerness. I embark in this cause with such hearty goodwill, such confidence in the justice of our intentions, as precludes all fear of an unhappy issue. It must place my sister’s son in that situation, which, long ere this, he ought to have occupied. Which of our celebrated relics must I take to protect me in my journey ?”

“ A pair of pistols, your old travelling companions, I will venture to recommend as no bad substitute for all the saints in the Kalendar. To gain the respect of the vulgar, I have no objection to your publicly displaying some mouldering bone or saint-like countenance.”

“ By the by,” returned Lorenzo, significantly, “ if walls have ears, you will be no abbot.”

Having, through Niccolo’s influence, obtained leave for a few days’ absence, Lorenzo set out early the following morning on his expedition. Niccolo, with the most demure aspect, attended him to the outer court to bestow his benediction, and sprinkle him with holy water, hoping, by this farce, to rise still higher in the good opinion of his brethren.

## CHAP. XIX.

*Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,  
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,  
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,  
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
As thou, sad Virgin ! for thy ravish'd hair.*

POPE.

FOR two days Tomaso anxiously waited for Beatrice's promised summons. Desirous of acquitting himself with credit in his approaching interview with his learned mistress, he endeavoured to recollect all the curious philosophical dialogues he had heard in the service of his present and former masters. The third day his anxiety terminated. His master had sunk into repose, and he was returning to chat a while with Bianca, when the fair composer whispered softly from a gallery above.

“ Tomaso ! now is the hour ; approach.”

Without replying, the curious domestic went up stairs, and was conducted to an apartment situated at the remotest part of the castle. The room was fancifully fitted

up

up with various ornaments allusive to study and learning. THE SEAT OF HEAVENLY MUSING was depicted in large golden letters above the door. Devotional pieces, images of favourite saints, and religious inscriptions occupied the front: several large mirrors and busts of famous writers, entwined with laurel, were placed opposite. On the right was arranged her collection of books, while the left was principally engaged with allegorical paintings, among which Apollo, the Muses, Minerva, and Fame, with their insignia, were the most conspicuous. Tomaso looked round with surprise, and began to augur well of his fair conductress. His attention was at length attracted by a large iron chest in the middle of the room, where he believed great treasure was deposited. Beatrice observing this, said with a smile,

“ Your discernment is surely great. What I have prepared for thy delight is now secured in that Vulcanian repository.”

“ I can never be sufficiently thankful for your bounty, Signora,” said Tomaso, who now expected to have, at least, as many ducats as he could carry down stairs.

“ Let

"Let your grateful emotions subside," replied Beatrice, approaching the iron chest with a light.

The cover was now slowly raised, while Tomaso's looks expressed his eagerness to behold the glittering prize.

"It is heavy," said she, her right hand still in the coffer.

"So much the better, Signora," replied her attendant, who imagined she had hold of a purse. "So much the better. The more there is in it, the more good it will do."

"Your sentiments and mine are in perfect harmony," said Beatrice, as she placed a large manuscript volume in his hands. "This," continued she, "is the golden book I spoke of; therefore prepare yourself. Rouse the latent energies of your understanding, while I rehearse this for our mental banquet!"

"Golden book!" thought our philosopher. "Then I warrant it treats of alchymy and the philosopher's stone. I am resolved to see the end of it, however."

Bidding him "illumine" two large  
wax-

wax-lights, she placed herself opposite the mirror, and, hemming affectedly she said,

“ Tomafo ! as to repeat the whole of this composition, and listen to your remarks, would occupy many nocturnal hours, I shall now only essay your critical tasteful capacity with a small portion of this volume. Inform me, therefore, whether you prefer the pathetic, the humorous, the sublime, or the descriptive ?”

“ I should be much better pleased with a few pages about the stone of the philosophers, or the seven sciences, or *other* curious experiments.”

“ I am sorry, truly sorry, to find that you prefer dull matter of fact to the inspirations of the muse. This volume,” added she, with emphasis, and laying her hand on the manuscript, “ is indebted for its enlargement to those holy inspirations by which the favoured few soar into the heavenly regions of fancy, and seat themselves on the highest pinnacle of the Parnassian mount !”

“ Well, Signora,” replied Tomafo, almost repenting of his curiosity, “ if there’s nothing in that thick book about philosophy

phy and experiments, and Logic, and Aristotle, and Astrology, perhaps you have some nice descriptions."

" In them, I abound even to profusion. Methinks I will commence with the portrait of the incomparable Celia, then proceed to her valiant knight, describe two or three bloody combats, and conclude, for this evening, with the wolves in the enchanted forest."

" As you please," said Tomaso, gravely.

" First for my heroine. Let attention engross every faculty.—How shall I begin? In what forms of expression can I convey to mortal ears an idea of those perfections which enchanted every beholder? Ten thousand tongues, each uttering ten thousand languages, would fail to do justice to the ten-thousandth part of her graceful, dignified loveliness."

" Oh, Signora, that's fine! It is so like arithmetic!"

Beatrice continued without noticing his exclamation.

" Where all is beauty in perfection, what feature shall I select for a primary expatiation? Her eyes—but let me forbear, even

even in imagination, to view those radiant orbs, lest I should be blinded by their effulgence! Her cheeks appeared like roses *half-blown, rising*——”

“ Why not *full blown*, Signora?” interrupted Tomaso.

“ Pertinently observed, indeed; but be assured I shall prove its propriety. Even in common conversation, which is for ever lost to the world, I weigh every word in the balance of prudence, propriety, and decorum, ere I utter it with my lips; how much more carefully ought I then to weigh every sentence, every word, nay, every syllable of a performance which may be as permanent as the universe! Know then, Tomaso, that I pourtray the cheeks of my heroine as only *half blown*, that her humble adorers may hope, lovely as she is, to behold her more transcendently lovely, when again blessed by her presence. But a flower, *full blown*, is nearer its destruction.”

Ah, Signora, you’re really a nice reasoner. I warrant you understand something of syllogisms and logic. But would not your description of her cheeks be still better

b  
a  
t  
better if you mentioned what kind of roses they were like, as it might be easily proved there are both white and red?"

" An exceedingly proper suggestion. Convey that pen to me, and I will instantly remove your objection, and obviate the snarls of the cynical critic."

After altering the passage, she again proceeded.

" Her cheeks resembled *red* roses, half-blown, rising from a dazzling field of snow. Her lips were angelic, and when she gave utterance to the delectable emotions of her soul, disclosed teeth, like orient pearls, arranged on branches of coral. Her mouth was so fascinating, that I shall not attempt a description. Let it suffice, that, like a summer's cloud on the decline of a remarkable fine day, every change was harmonious, pleasing, and heavenly. Luxuriant hair, concealing the darts of Cupid—"

" Oh Signora!" said Tomaso, " Would not bodkins be better?"

" I speak only in metaphor.—Her luxuriant hair concealing the darts of Cupid, waved gracefully round her snowy neck, which rose stately as the swan's. The breeze,

breeze, as if enamoured, revelled mid her amber-coloured ringlets, now shading, then revealing—”

“ Suppose, Signora, you write, what pity time should ever turn them grey !”

This unexpected remark caused Beatrice to raise her eyes from the manuscript, when she quickly perceived how the idea had arisen in the fertile brain of her domestic. Glancing on the mirror, she, with some confusion, saw the critic attentively regarding her own ebon tresses sprinkled with the silver hue of age, and which was now the more easily distinguishable, as, instead of her usual close head-dress, a kind of chaplet was her only covering. For some time past this change had been a source of regret to our fair authoress ; for alas ! in that barbarous age, the metamorphosing arts practised in our days, which give to age the semblance of youth, where unknown heads were not then sprinkled with white dust, nor Grecian compounds and Tricosian fluids invented. To any other cause than age, she was ever ready to impute the whitening of her dark ringlets ; it being sometimes the effect of close study,

at

at others of fear. Beatrice now closed her romance, and, after a short pause, said, "It is not the mighty hand of Time alone, as you seem to suppose, which transforms golden to silver locks, as several of the most celebrated antients, ere visited by the prime of their years, experienced. Witness that daring warrier and consummate politician, Julius Cæsar. Even our own Petrarch, that melodious bard, that enthusiastic inspirer of rapturous love, early attained that honour."

"Honour! Signora. I don't like such honour. If Bianca's locks were grey, I should not like her half so well; and if I was you, I should pull out all the white hairs. You will still have plenty left to conceal the bodkins, that is, darts, of Cupid. I speak in metaphor."

"In discernment, Tomaso, you are not wholly deficient. I think, as we are not likely to meet with intrusion, and as you can make a selection much better than myself, I will indulge your fancy, and suffer you to root up those emblems of—of—of—But it imports not what. Yet, observe, I charge

charge you, on your obedience, be secret as the grave."

Beatrice, who had long prided herself on holding the odious male creatures at a respectable distance, now imagined, that to admit her domestic so near her person, for such an operation, would be a breach of that delicacy and propriety of conduct she had hitherto observed. This would, probably, have prevented Tomaso's experiment, had he not guessed the cause of her hesitation, and suggested an admirable expedient to save her virgin blushes.

" You, Signora, may remain in the room, and I will stand on the outside, and pull them out."

" Your words are enigmatical. I understand them not."

" Well, Signora, I don't wonder at that, though you are so clever at invention about beauty and so forth. And here is my reason, because you have not seen the curious experiments and proofs my two masters used to make. I mean for you to place the hair through a small opening of the door, while I stand without, and proceed *secundum artem.*"

" Methinks,"

“ Methinks,” replied Beatrice, “ the idea favours of ingenuity and decorum. Yet, if you had the sight of a lynx, and the eyes of an Argus, you would fail to complete the nice selection in Stygian gloom, and a light might expose me to the malicious observations of a lurking eaves-dropper.”

“ Oh, Signora, that may be easily remedied. I can vary the experiment. You yourself may stand outside the room, and I, with the light, within. Ha! is not that philosophical?”

This proposal was readily agreed to. Fearing to trust him alone with her precious manuscript, she replaced it in the *vulcanian repository*, and, turning to the mirror, collected into one lock those parts most affected by time. Then, standing without, she inserted the party-coloured collection through the opening of the door, which being gradually closed by Tomaso, he proceeded to execute his grand project. Desirous of being thought an expeditious workman, or of rejoining his dulcinea below, he was not very exact in pulling out a single hair at a time. Six was, however,

ever, his maximum. To reconcile his impatience with justice, he thus argued, "Taking half a dozen away at once, gives only a single shock; but the same number, pulled out singly, would give six shocks. Ergo, I save five shocks!"

To his great surprise she endured his twitches without uttering one exclamation. Such heroic fortitude she probably derived from contemplating the deeds of chivalry, but Tomaso afterwards suspected it arose from her fears of drawing impertinent witnesses to the scene of operation.

"The experiment is finished," said he, and the fair candidate for youthful honours was re-admitted to the light. Snatching a taper, she hastened to the mirror to contemplate the transformation. But, oh ye gods and goddesses! what modern pen can describe her astonishment, her shame, her frenzied rage, on perceiving the lock was as white as snow! For some time the powers of articulation were suspended. A faint smile from Tomaso at length roused the storm. Flying to the table like a fury, she seized the ink-bottle, and threw it at him,

as

as he was beginning a fine philosophical declamation.

“ You treacherous Cyclops ! exclaimed she, “ with which of my enemies art thou in league ? Why am I thus betrayed ? Is this thy vigilance and attention ? Speak, thou monster ! did not I say *white* hairs ? Oh unfortunate woman ! to trust to the faithless sex, and be thus deceived ! To undergo the pains of martyrdom, and be thus remunerated ! Reply this moment, thou traitor to thy promise ! why, oh why, am I thus disgraced ? ”

“ Be calm, Signora. I assure you passion is hurtful to your health and beauty, as indeed may be easily demonstrated. *Primo*— ”

“ Villain ! cease that canting absurdity. Instantly declare, if thou hopest for mercy, what impelled thee to a deed so vile ? ”

“ I’ll tell you all my reasons in a moment, Signora. Only sit down, and be quiet, or you’ll bring up all the servants, and awaken my poor master. What I did was not through any ill-will, it was all for *love*— ”

“ Love !

“ Love ! Thou presumptuous base-born wretch ! Love ! Dare such a reptile as thou aspire to the possession of one who has had nobles in her train ? Oh Heavens ! Love !”

“ I never thought of such a thing, Signora. I meant only the love of science. Listen with patience, and I will prove, nay, demonstrate, the cause of the whole wonderful experiment, which may be of more advantage to you, if not to posterity, than you are aware of.”

More through fear of being exposed to the derision of the servants, than from hopes of alleviation from his reasoning, Beatrice sat down, and Tomaso, standing near the door, continued his defence.

“ You must know, Signora, that the grand philosophers, who often visited my late master, used to dispute about the colour of hair, and the cause of its turning white. I recollect as well as if it had happened only yesterday, that one of them, a fine alchymist and astronomer, said, that the stalks of green corn had a green juice, but when dried by the sun, they turned white. ‘ Now,’ said he, ‘ perhaps the hairs may be hollow, and coloured by some juice which

which runs through them, and when they receive no juice, they turn white, like the stalks of corn."

" What connection has this with my misfortune? said Beatrice.

" Oh, a great deal, Signora, only listen patiently, and you will find I am not such an *asinus*, as my master in a passion sometimes called me, as to do any thing without a reason. When I had the lock in my hand, now, thought I, is the time to prove whether a hair is hollow, and turns grey for want of juice. If I pull out the dark hairs, it stands with reason, that what has formerly run into them will run into the white, and make them as beautiful as before. And I warrant it will do so; for when I stop the mouth of the Triton fountain, there comes twice as much out of the nostrils. So you should not have scolded, or thrown the ink at me, for trying such a nice experiment. I warrant your hair will be as black as my hat in the morning."

Little calmed by his curious philosophy, she bade him begone; saying, should his suppositions not be verified, she would force him to quit the castle.

" Oh,

“ Oh, Signora!” cried Tomaso, mournfully, “ have mercy ! Do not turn me away from my dear master, and Bianca ! The most curious experiment in nature will sometimes be spoiled without any fault of the philosophers. I solemnly promise never to do the like again, and will listen to the descriptions of the valiant knight, and the wolves, and the enchanted forest, whenever you shall choose. Nay more, Signora, to prove I have no ill-will, because you have ink'd my face, if the white hairs do not turn to a beautiful dark colour, I'll pull them out also.”

“ Pull them out ! Thou infernal compound of inventive malice, and busy meddling impertinence ! I will pull thine eyes out.”

“ Oh the Virgin and the seven sciences ! Did ever I think a lady of your wisdom would be so angry about such a trifle !”

“ A trifle ! Is that which prevents my ever shewing my face again, a trifle ? What mortal in this sublunary world can retain their equanimity under such base treatment !”

“ Consider, Signora, you are now more like that celebrated ancient Julius Cæsar, and may be better known to posterity by the name of the nymph of the silver lock, than ever Celia will be by her golden ones !”

“ What ! Does the vile caitiff presume to ridicule ? Nymph of the silver lock ! Thou torturer of memory, what fiend inspries thee ? Thou shalt be exorcised, thou traitor ! Oh that my looks could annihilate thee from the face of the earth !”

“ Oh Signora ! Signora ! had you not better get your scales ?”

“ Scales ! Thou anomaly of creation, what meanest thou ?”

“ Why, Signora, I only mean your scales of prudence and decorum, in which you weigh your words before you utter—”

This retort was more than she was able to bear. Laying aside all regard for the dignity of her sex and station, she arose, half frantic, and flew towards Tomaso. Happily for him, he suspected some such ebullition, and stood prepared for flight. Without stopping to try a new logical affirmative, he took to his heels, just in time

to

to avoid the wax-light, which the enraged authoress threw at his head.—As he hastened down stairs from the *seat of heavenly musing*, he trembled lest she should tumble the vulcanian repository upon him, and mechanically held up his arm to protect his philosophical pericranium from a collision with so precipitate an opponent.

---

## CHAP. XX.

*“ Un noir dessin se forme a l’ombre du mystere.”*

THE evening of the third day after Lorenzo left the convent, he returned from his excursion, accompanied by a boy apparently about four years old. Lest the child should rouse suspicion, he left him at a small distance from the convent, and hastened to his companion. On his way he met Niccolo, whose anxious expectation had kept him continually on the watch, and prevented his daily visit to the castle.

“ My nephew is arrived,” said Lorenzo. “ But, had not the importance and

justice of the measure supported me, I believe I could not have resisted the intreaties of my poor kinswoman for leave to accompany me."

" For God's sake! let her remain where she is," cried Niccolo.

" So I intend. What comforts she is capable of enjoying at her time of life, I have taken care shall not be wanting; and time will allay her sorrow."

" Or end her," added Niccolo. " But why do we thus spend our time? Is that child, I see at a distance, your nephew?"

Being answered in the affirmative, they walked towards him, discoursing by the way."

" The count's zeal for adoption," said Niccolo, " appears already less ardent. The sooner it is decided the better. This very evening must either complete or destroy our design."

" So soon! I find you intend to strike while the iron is hot."

" I do. For, on closely examining my past life, I discern many moments in which prompt execution might have prevented my being what I am."

" Say,

“ Say, rather, that a too prompt execution has made you what you are!”

“ No more of that, Lorenzo. Why revive such thoughts at such a moment?”

“ To preserve you from rashness.”

Carlo’s approach now interrupted the conversation. Niccolò observed the boy for a few moments with great attention, and then embraced him with unusual emotion. This warmth, from one who had hitherto been guided by extreme caution in every step of his present project, appeared as impolitic as surprising, to Lorenzo, and his looks clearly expressed “ What is there in this child capable of thus affecting him?”

Niccolò observing it, and wishing to change the subject, said,

“ I think the boy has your features.”

“ Not one of them, by the Virgin! Your lowering cowl surely blinds you. His non-resemblance to any of our family has often puzzled me. Faith! I think he resembles you more than his own father.”

“ Nonsense, nonsense. That, I am certain, is not true; nor, if it were, would it be of any importance. I hope we shall have time enough to study his physiognomy.

my. Mean time, listen to my plan, which is the fruit of three days' contemplation.— I mean to go immediately to the castle, and endeavour to persuade the credulous count to take the air in the garden. When you find we are entered, approach with your nephew to that part of the wall opposite to the triton fountain. The sound of the water will direct you to the proper spot. When I cough loudly, beat the boy, not severely, but in such a manner as to make him scream aloud. Novini will undoubtedly be startled at the unusual outcry, and, with a little of my prompting, send some of his servants to inquire into the cause. If that busy fool, Tomaso, be sent, beware of him. When they come near, quit the boy, and run off as if afraid of detection. The rest be my concern.”

“ I understand you. You expect forcibly to awaken the compassion of the count in favour of an injured friendless child.”

“ Yes, I do expect it. Can you propose any improvement?”

“ No, no. In affairs of this nature you reign supreme. Indeed, if the aid of the sword were required, perhaps I might give the

the first stroke, as I have done before now, you know."

" Cease to revive such ideas. Were you not equally——"

" I beg your pardon," interrupted Lorenzo, with serious eagerness. " I meant no such allusion. Why should I boast preceding you in that which has given me so much concern?"

" Well, well. Don't hurt the boy. A few threatening gestures may effectually terrify him."

" Will you teach *me* humanity?" said Lorenzo. " Affection for an only and dearly-beloved sister will prevent the least cruelty to her child."

" True, true. But it is time that I was gone. I wish your dress had favoured less of the friar; but still I think you will not be taken for one of our order, which is the principal point to be avoided. To lessen the probability of detection, I shall, however, delay the promised signal as long as I can, that the dusk may favour your retreat."

He now presented Lorenzo with a small book, saying,

" Slip

“ Slip this into Carlo’s pocket, or drop it near him ere you run off ; it may be of essential service in securing Marco’s approbation to our design. Don’t follow close. Should any collusion be suspected we shall be undone.”

He then hastily departed, leaving his confederate forming conjectures how the book could favour Carlo’s advancement.

The artful Carthusian soon arrived at the castle. He was admitted by Tomafo, who could scarcely conceal the aversion his presence inspired.

“ Ah,” thought he “ I doubt you are going to poison my poor master’s mind. I dare say the countess was as innocent as the child unborn, aye, or as Bianca herself. I fear my master has lost a proper relish for logic and the seven sciences, or he would not have believed such a thing without actual demonstration. Then, as for your explanation of your out-of-the-way behaviour, when alone with the dying countess, it is not a very clear one. It is like a *deception visus*, as Father Paul said, when once I brought him his night-cap instead of the ink-stand. Then I know, at least your *ap-  
petite*

petite proves, that you love the good things of this world ; now woman is a good thing, ergo, it follows that you love a woman. There's a conclusum. Yet you conceal your face for fear they should take a fancy to you. Oh, good father, had you consulted me, I would have shewn you a far better method of preserving their virtue and your own. Besides, muffling your face will make you sooner beloved than openly displaying it, as might be easily demonstrated."

Vignolo having been absent all that day from the castle, Novini was exceedingly melancholy when his ghostly father entered. Had the least compassion remained in his bosom, the scene would surely have revived the god-like quality, and caused him to confess the motives of his late vile insinuations. But, of all men, the systematic hypocrite is, perhaps, the most insensible to humanity. Natural emotions are annihilated. Every step is artificial and directed by interest. Self is not only the center, but the boundary, of his benevolence.

" My son," said the arch-deceiver, " I hope you will pardon my negligence in not

visiting you sooner ; if negligence indeed it can be called, when devotion had absorbed every other care, and drawn me as it were from myself."

" Oh, holy father ! exclaimed Novini, plaintively, " that I could be drawn from myself, that memory could be for ever erased, that conscience was no more, that I ceased to be !"

My son, yield not thus to the suggestions of the bitter enemy of man. Trust to the Holy Virgin and her blessed Son, and a paradisaical period may yet arrive even on this earth. In solitude too ! This must not be. Had you not better refresh your body with the sweet air of the garden, while I exhilarate your soul with those spiritual comforts which the Church is ever ready to afford to unhappy sinners ?"

" Ah ! father, does not he who bears a dart rankling in his bosom, feel every situation alike miserable ?"

Agreeing at length to the proposal, Tomaso was roused from his philosophical reverie, to support his master to the garden. No other domestic could so well comport himself

himself to Novini's peculiar situation, or knew so well how to alleviate it.

Arriving at a rising ground near the triton fountain, Niccolo commenced his spiritual eloquence. While it continued, Tomaso rambled about the garden in hopes of discovering something to please his master. He soon returned with a bunch of flowers near as large as himself, which he presented with no bad grace. He thought Novini's smile sufficient proof of having made a successful experiment. He then sat down at his master's feet, and soon became more interested by the prospect before him, than the spiritual comforts so liberally distributed by the pious Carthusian. Though pleased with the view, his pleasure could not suspend the exercise of his usual reasoning powers. The light galliots in the bay first attracted his attention, but even while gratified by their gay-coloured awnings, now obscure, then touched into brilliancy by the setting sun, he attempted to improve his arithmetical knowledge, by counting their number. This important matter he could not accomplish, their motion, distance, and a rising mist, successively retarding

ing his progress. Giving this up in despair, he next endeavoured to number some lofty pines at a small distance, but alas ! was repeatedly baffled by their branches intermingling by the wind. This was almost too much for our exact contemplator of prospects. He thought the very elements were in league against philosophy and the seven sciences. Luckily his eye now caught the glittering fanes of Naples. Having nothing to apprehend from *their* motion, he was leisurely proceeding with his important calculations, when a pause in Niccolo's oration, who thought he heard some voice near the wall, tempted him to break his long silence.

" Oh, master," said he, " what a fine prospect here is ! I have counted above twenty churches. I warrant you one to the left of the castle, that shines far brighter than the rest, is Saint Michael's."

" Prove it," said the count, who was now somewhat enlivened, and willing to indulge his domestic's argumentative garrulity.

" Prove it ! Signore," repeated Tomaso, " I doubt if that be possible ; and I'll give

give you my reasons. Primo, if I went there this moment, I should not be certain it was that which I now see. Secundo, if I took a friend with me, and saw him mount to the top of Saint Michael's, when I came back again and observed a man on a steeple, how could I be certain whether it was the same man or the same steeple? Truly, Signore, I am of your opinion, that there is nothing certain in this transitory state.

“ The sentiment is, alas ! too true. But were it possible for you to feel the agony which——”

“ My son,” interrupted Niccolo, “ the things of this world are purposely rendered uncertain, that we may place our affections solely on things above. How inconsistent, how sinful, is it in mortals to repine at the constitution of nature, to grieve at that which is without remedy !”

“ Alas ! father, that is the very cause of my complaint. Oh, were there but hope !”

To this the monk made no reply. Judging this the proper period for the promised signal, he coughed aloud.

“ I think, reverend father,” said Tomaso,

maso, " that so sudden a cough proves that the night air——"

A stop was here put to his logic by a vehement outcry as of a child in distress.

" Wherever I turn," said the count, mournfully, " my ears are saluted with the cries of woe. All, all reminds me of the misery of man. Haste, Tomaso, and see what is the occasion of it."

Niccolo feared the activity of so curious a messenger; but, ere he thought of retarding him, Tomaso's impatience had hurried him straight forward to the wall.

" Your servant's eagerness destroys his judgment," said the monk. " He has forgotten there is a gate. However, I'll go myself and see what is the matter."

" See ! father," replied the count, " his judgment is safe. He has already mounted the wall."

" I wish he had mounted the gallows," thought Niccolo, trembling lest his hour was come.

Tomaso no sooner gained the top of the wall than he lowered on the other side, crying loudly,

" Oh, you cruel villain! Will you murder

murder the child? But I'll have you, go where you will."

The only hope now remaining to Niccolò was, that the child would be the primary object of Tomaso's concern, and attract his attention till Lorenzo was out of danger. He, however, determined, if his confederate did not escape, to disclaim any knowledge of the deception, and, if accused, to impute the charge to envy and interested motives.

Meantime, several of the servants, and, among the rest, Bianca, alarmed by Carlo's cries, and Tomaso's shouts, flocked to the spot, and found the child lying on the ground, overcome by apprehension, and exhausted by his vehement outcries. At first they imagined he was wounded, as a short dagger lay beside him; but, on examination, no marks of violence were discovered. After soothing him to silence, Bianca carried him to her master, the servants following with the dagger, and the small book already mentioned. At the garden-gate they encountered Niccolò, whose impatience to know what was going forward had induced him to leave the count alone

alone. His eye glanced eagerly round in search of our *soi-disant* philosopher.

“ Where is Tomaso ?” inquired he, anxiously. “ Your master desires his assistance to conduct him home.”

“ Oh, holy father !” said Bianca, “ he is run after a blood-thirsty villain that was going to murder this poor boy with that dagger. I wish Tomaso had let him go about his business. Oh, the holy Virgin ! who knows but he may be killed !”

“ I hope one of them will,” muttered Niccolo.

“ 'Tis lucky, however,” continued Bianca, “ that the murderer left his dagger. Poor Tomaso will have some chance for his life. Oh that he was come !”

The count's voice here interrupted her exclamations, and caused them all to hasten to repeat the wonderful adventure. Various were their comments on the occasion. But it seemed the general opinion that the person, whom Tomaso was in pursuit of, had been employed to murder the child. The boy's forlorn situation and artless expressions of fear awakened Novini's compassion. He ordered some fruit to be given him,

him, and was pleased to find his attention caused returning cheerfulness to sparkle in his eye. He then put such questions as he hoped would throw some light on the boy's residence and parentage ; but all the information the child could give consisted in the following particulars. That he had neither father nor mother ; that his name was Carlo ; that he had lived with his aunt in the country ; that a man had taken him away, and brought him to that place to kill him.

“ Oh, world ! world !” exclaimed Novini. “ Would I were out of thee ! Crime and misery ride triumphant, and level every beauty to the dust. Even this flower, which has scarcely reared its tender head, already feels their influence, already suffers from the storms of life.”

Niccolo, hitherto kept silent by his fears, now discerned Tomaso, unaccompanied, running towards the garden, and ventured to add,

“ How such innocence can have offended, seems difficult to conjecture. Let us, however, my son, forbear any complaint, and thank the Almighty that we have been appointed

appointed the instruments of his preservation."

" *We!*" replied Bianca, zealous in her favourite's defence, " *We!* holy father; *Tomaso* was the instrument. Oh, the Virgin! here he comes."

The philosophical domestic, covered with dust, and perspiring from every pore, now came up.

" Have you found the villain?" cried they, all together.

" Alas! no, master," said he, piteously. " Such a chase I have had! However, you shall hear the whole from beginning to end, in *lucido ordo*, as Father Paul used to say. But I fear, Signore, you will be catching cold. You had better go within doors."

He offered his arm as he spoke.

" It matters not, my honest fellow, what becomes of me; yet, for others' sake, I shall follow your advice."

The company then left the garden.

" Tomaso is a clever little fellow enough," said the gardener, " but foolishly fond of nonsensical proofs."

" Well," said Bianca, smartly, " he need not go far to seek proofs of his courage.

age. But God knows how you can prove yours."

When the count was seated in his easy chair, he ordered Tomaso a bumper to recruit his exhausted spirits. Ere he began, Marco, whom the increasing infirmities of age, and the company of his grand-daughter had retained within doors, roused himself so far, on the intimation of what was going forward, as to join the group below. Nay, curiosity on this occasion had sufficient power to overcome Beatrice's shame for her late disaster, and attract her from heavenly musing. As soon as they were seated, Tomaso began his relation, all remaining in a listening attitude expressive of great curiosity. In the monk's lowering, half-concealed countenance, apprehensive anxiety was the predominant expression.

" You know, Signore," said the honest domestic, addressing himself to Novini, " that I mounted the garden wall just opposite the triton fountain."

" Oh, thou monster!" muttered Beatrice, who was now forcibly reminded of his curious experiment, and illustrative allusion.

" So,

" So, Signore, I soon found that the alarm was occasioned by a man, who had a friar-like appearance, beating this little boy here. Seeing him take out a dagger, I thought he was going to kill the child, but I believe it would puzzle all my masters, and Aristotle, and Plato, nay the seven wise men of Greece, to discover why the villain should beat the child, if he intended to kill him afterwards. However, I did not think of that then, but jumped down on the other side in a twinkling. I dare say I arrived at the critical moment for preventing murder, but as that cannot be proved, I'll say no more about it. He might mean to stab him and he might not, and, as Father Paul once ——"

" Let Paul alone till you have finished your story," said the count.

" Yes, Signore. Well, the moment he saw me, he dropt the dagger and took to his heels, and I after him without minding the child. For, thought I, if I stop to take care of him, the reprobate is sure to escape; but the child I am certain of finding again. Even in such a hurry, Signore, I was able to act according to logic, which is a sure proof ——"

" That

“ That you are a busy, rambling, im-methodical blockhead,” said Beatrice.

Tomafo was about to reply, when his master desired him to proceed.

“ So, Signore, I pursued him as fast as I could, without once thinking I had neither gun, sword, nor pistol, nothing save the arms with which every man is furnished by nature.”

“ If you had called on me,” said honest Marco, “ I would have given you a precious relic, and a picture of my namesake, as large as yourself, which would have preserved you better than all the arms in the world. However, as I did not know of your wants, it is no fault of mine, that is, I am not to be blamed.”

“ I would rather have had an invulnerable buckler,” said Tomafo.

“ Ah ! my good fellow, those days are for ever past. But go on.”

“ The villain ran very fast, but I ran faster, and, consequently, should soon have come up with him, had the ruins near the Carthusian monastery been half-a-mile further off. But this not being the case, he entered one of the broken arches. In

I followed,

I followed, though the place was very dark, and he might have easily stood in a corner and stabbed me as I passed. I groped about a good while, but to no purpose."

" All is safe," thought Niccolo, his countenance brightening. " The day's our own."

" At length, Signore, as I could not see my finger before me, and as I thought you would be waiting for me, I left the ruins; first, however, I took several large stones from the rubbish, and threw them upwards and downwards, to the left and to the right, in hopes some of them would make the rascal cry out. But no noise was heard except the rumbling of stones. As I ran home, I found this, which may perhaps lead to some rare discovery."

He then produced a miniature picture representing a young female, in whose nymph-like figure, simplicity and elegance seemed united. It was set in a plain gold frame. Its only inscription was J. D. in a cypher. The count narrowly examined it, then handed it to Niccolo, who betrayed great emotion as he glanced over the features. The dagger was next examined.

One

One of the servants observed that it very much resembled one he had formerly seen, which belonged to the freebooters of the Apennines. Again Niccolo started, but said nothing. He then opened the small book which he had given to Lorenzo, and, after reading a passage, exclaimed, with well-affected surprise and horror, as he rapidly made the sign of the cross.

“ Here is the discovery. Search no farther. Satan himself has been at work. The castle will be polluted by such blasphemy.”

“ What is it, good father? said Novini.

“ One of the diabolical volumes used by the heretical Hussites, who deny the real presence in the blessed sacrament, and have abolished the holy practice of confession.”

“ Oh, the infidels!” cried the zealous Marco. “ Give me the hellish book that I may burn it, that is, commit it to the flames.”

This request was readily granted. Marco took it by his finger and thumb, as if a full grasp were infectious, and hurled it into the hottest part of the fire.

“ Now,”

“ Now,” said he, as he watched the *auto de fe*, “ this mansion will be purified. Oh ! Tomafo, you have saved both the soul and body of this child, that is, if he become a good catholic.”

“ I thought at the time,” added the monk, “ that no true son of the church would have ever attempted to murder an innocent child. The sacred vestments have been employed to scandalize our holy religion. The desire of afflicting some strenuous supporter of the true faith, or removing an obstacle to the gratification of ambition, or avarice, has, in all probability, prompted the horrid attempt. Thank God ! he has been disappointed. Come, my child,” added he, taking Carlo tenderly by the hand, “ come with me, and I will endeavour to save thy soul from the roaring lion. Yes, thou shalt become the son of the church by *adoption* !”

“ *Adoption* !” repeated the count, eagerly catching at the word, as the artful monk expected. “ *Adoption* ! On me that office devolves. From this moment, good father, if his connexions remain unknown, I shall consider him as my own child.”

“ My

“ My son, Heaven, no doubt, inspires that noble and generous idea. This poor boy stands, providentially, in that very predicament which we deemed necessary for him who should be blessed with your protection. He is indeed a chosen vessel.”

“ But, count son-in-law, what then is to become of my grand-daughter’s rights? By Saint Mark! it is very unnatural to put away your own flesh and blood, as a body may say, for the sake of this stranger, one that you never saw before in your life. I say justice is justice.”

“ Believe me, my good friend,” replied Novini, “ I have weighty reasons for what I mean to do. Justice shall not be violated.”

“ Nor yet our holy faith,” said Niccolo.

“ But the seven sciences,” added Tomaso.

“ Peace!” cried Beatrice, waving her hand. “ Wilt thou, nephew, take an alien to thy breast, and reject the chaste fruit of virtuous love, the divine Laura? This boy may be the offspring of some harlot, and shalt thou, with eternity before thine eyes, be the encourager of vice.”

“ Fair lady,” said Niccolo, “ the cir-

cumstances attending the discovery of this boy render your suggestion improbable. Would it not be more consistent to suppose him connected with Virtue, since he was persecuted by Vice ? That face," continued he, pointing to the miniature," " bespeaks a noble, delicate, and virtuous mind, and probably represents the mother of this child."

Carlo's features were now compared with the portrait. All agreed there was not any resemblance, though Niccolo endeavoured to point out a similarity in a few trifling particulars.

" Well, my children," said he, " this does not disprove my assertion. Some bear the full impression of the father, others of the mother. With the Calabrians, we may observe of the former, that——"

Novini, knowing what he was going to say, and being averse to disclose to all present his suspicions of Laura's legitimacy, now interrupted him.

" As I, holy father, am determined to pursue my plan relative to this child, waste not your arguments on my kinswoman. She, you know, is romantic, and discerns every

every thing in a different colour from other people."

" Ah ! Signora," whispered Tomaso, " I wish that could be proved. Then, what appeared white to other eyes, might appear black to yours, and you would not be angry for what cannot be helped. As to the hair growing dark again, I have discovered that it can never be."

"No more, reptile!" said Beatrice, with an angry dignified look. Then, turning to Novini, she said,

"Why was not I consulted on this momentous affair? Did you think my intellects had degenerated?"

"No. I thought them superior to my own, so I forbore to reveal my design of adopting an heir to perpetuate our name, lest you should make my better cause appear the worst. Where you could not convince, you might perplex. Now, opposition will be of no avail. Laura, however, shall not be neglected. Their rights are the same, and they shall equally enjoy my affection."

Marco and Beatrice were about to question the identity of Laura and the

stranger's rights, but were prevented by Novini's declaring himself exhausted by the events of the evening, and desirous of rest. He then desired Carlo might be taken especial care of, and brought to him early in the morning. Niccolo, hurrying over his benediction, now left the room, curious to learn the particulars which Tomaso was unable to explain.

## CHAP. XXI.

*"More is meant than meets the ear."*

MILTON.

"IT is amazing to me," said Tomaso, as he was undressing his master, "that Father Niccolo, who is so fearful as to run away from a spider, should return alone to the convent. There is certainly some mystery in it. Although he said himself that the villain had a spite against the church, yet he does not hesitate to pass alone by the ruins where the heretic murderer lies *perdu*, and may kill him in a moment."

"Alas !

"Alas! too true," replied the count. "Why did you not mention this before the holy man went away?"

"For many reasons, master: "Firstly, it was his place to think of his own safety. Secondly, he once bade me not speak till I was spoken to. Thirdly, he might wish to try an experiment on the virtue of some new relic. Fourthly, I did not think of it till he was gone. Fifthly——"

"Your last reason renders all others superfluous," said Novini. "Might not Niccolo be yet overtaken, and, if wounded, taken care of? Take Peter, the gardener, with you, and see whether any accident has happened."

The active domestic instantly left the room for that purpose. Peter would rather have been excused, but Bianca's late sarcasm on his courage prevented his refusal. They accordingly set off, running full speed until they approached the ruins. Peter then suddenly stopt.

"Yonder's the murderer!" whispered he fearfully, and pointing to a human figure emerging from an arch-way. "Let us fly!"

"That's

“That’s *fortunatus*,” said Tomaso. “We have just come in the very nick for making discoveries. Follow close, and we’ll soon prove the why and the wherefore he was going to kill the boy.”

Darting forward, he caught hold of a flowing garment.

“Sure enough, it is the villain,” cried he roughly. “Yield, or you are a dead man! You must come to my master and confess your treachery,” added he, dragging him along:

“Confess!” repeated the person trembling. “Has the count then discovered that I am the fa - - - - -”

“Oh! the blessed Virgin!” cried Peter, “this is Father Niccolo!”

“Father Niccolo! The devil! no sure.”

“Yes, I am he,” replied the monk, recovering from his surprise. “How darest thou lay hands on a servant of the Most High? I wish thou art not in league with heretics to destroy me.”

“Oh! father, I have nothing to do with heretics. I beg your pardon for my inconsiderate rashness. Indeed, indeed, it

was

was all a mistake ; I took you for a murderer."

" A murderer !" repeated Niccolo, shuddering.

" But how came you in this place, holy father ? What were you doing ? I dare say it might be easily proved that these ruins, considering what has passed this night, ought to have been carefully avoided by you."

" I am sure that's true," added Peter.

" Cursed impudent rascal !" thought the monk, " he will prove my ruin." For some time he was puzzled what answer to return to these interrogatories ; at length, assuming a haughty air, he observed, that he should not account for his conduct to such as him, but to his master he might be more explicit.

This disappointment of Tomaso's curiosity did not prevent him from offering to see the priest safe to his convent ; but he refused the offer, saying, he thought himself much safer alone, than in company with those undevoted to the church, and, in consequence, not so peculiarly the care of Providence. The offer was not renewed

ed by our half-offended philosopher. Taking Peter by the arm, he returned to the castle and informed his master of the adventure. The count was greatly perplexed at the intelligence, and anxious for Niccolo's explanation.

The monk, on his arrival at the convent, was informed that brother Lorenzo had returned a short time before, stripped of his habit, and dangerously wounded on the head by some daring robbers in the neighbourhood.

"Oh! the horrid villainy of this world!" exclaimed the hypocrite, turning up the white of his eyes. "Were it not for our prayers it would surely be destroyed!" — His heart, however, expressed a far different sentiment. "Oh!" thought he, "it is a plain case that Lorenzo has apprehended his clothes would occasion unpleasant inquiries, and so has left them in the ruins. But his wound? Surely he has not carried his artifice to such a height as to knock his skull against the wall?"

With an air of great concern, which made all the brethren admire the warmth of his friendship, he now hastened to the

cell

cell of his associate. He found him extended on his pallet, as pale as a corpse, and his head bound with a bandage. Lorenzo raised himself as Niccolo entered, and regarded him with a look of anxious inquiry.

“With me,” said Niccolo, “every thing has gone off tolerably successful. But I am quite impatient to hear your adventures with the robbers who stripped and wounded you. Poor man! do you think your desperate wound has left you sufficient strength to relate the particulars?

“I’ll try, for I feel my head much easier.”

“Easier!” retorted Niccolo, with a smile of incredulity. “Easier! Dare such a novice as you hope to deceive your master by so palpable a sham?”

“I can readily excuse your doubts. Ever scheming yourself, you have lost all relish for the simple truth. In the most natural occurrence your hollow heart suspects some sinister design. But, look on that,” pointing to a bloody garment, “and be convinced.”

“ By Jove ! I thought it was all a device, and almost envied you the invention. How did it happen ? I wonder I met no robbers.”

Lorenzo then related, that not having suspected any one would scale the garden-wall, he had been taken quite unprepared, and that, when disappointed of the child’s preventing Tomaso’s pursuit, he had dropped his sister’s picture for that purpose.

“ I assure you I was never so chased in my life. It was with much difficulty I reached the ruins without being overtaken. I plunged into the darkest recess for safety, and was closely followed by my indefatigable pursuer. You may recollect our exploring the place in order to discover if there was any subterraneous communication with the convent, of which, having frequently heard of similar convenient passages, we had some suspicion. At that time I noticed one solitary mutilated pillar, which now proved my only resource. I grasped it with my legs and arms, and mounted in a moment. Scarcely had I reached the summit, ere Tomaso was busily

busily engaged in groping round the recess. I dared not breathe or move, tho' my situation was very unpleasant. For some time he paced about, frequently stopping to listen. His temerity surprised me. Few, of his station, although equally courageous against a corporeal enemy, would so far have overcome the awful terrors of superstition as to brave, at that time, the horrors of the gloomy ruins. Hearing him, as if loosening fragments from the mouldering wall, I imagined he wished to be gone, and could not find his way out. But, to my cost, I soon discovered he had far different intentions. The stones began to fly about in all directions. Several grazed me as they past, but, providentially, without injuring me. In a personal contest, exertion might have overcome the very suggestion of fear, but while remaining thus passive, apprehension had its full force. My fate involved your's and my nephew's, or I would have instantly leaped down and closed with him. All was again still. I then heard him say, 'The villain has perhaps escaped another way,' and I began to breathe with less difficulty.

ficulty. 'I think,' added he, I will try once more, for Father Paul often said the last argument was always conclusive.' I was wishing both Paul and him at the devil, when a large stone struck me on the side of my head. I staggered with the shock, but no exclamation whatever escaped me. Even now I am surprised at my own fortitude. The d——d contriving rascal then listened for a moment and scampered away.'

"Rightly were you served. But for you, he might have been long since banished. This is the creature whom you said could be so easily managed, and who was like a charged gun which you could direct as you pleased. This evinces the truth of my reasoning, that the contrivances of a peculiar character are not easily foreseen. When we know the direction in which a ball is to be thrown, we may readily catch it; without such information we might wait for it in the east, when it flew to the west. Your's is, however, not the only danger arising from that d——d contriver as you now call him. He took hold of me in the ruins, which I entered on my return from the castle -

castle to discover whether you were gone. At first he mistook me for the murderer."

"No such great mistake," interrupted Lorenzo.

"True, as he thought I was you. Let us, for our own sakes, drop the subject.— Tomaso had the impertinence to interrogate me on the motives of my loitering there, and I dare say suspected some collusion. I avoided making any explanation to him, but deigned to assure him that I would satisfy his master in the morning. Yet I know not how to reconcile my conduct with consistency."

"Leave that task to me," said Lorenzo.

"To you! Your disregard and alteration of my instructions give me little hope of your invention. One of the servants hinted that the dagger, you so inconsiderately dropped, resembled those worn by the Apennine Banditti. The picture, too, might have proved our ruin. I trembled when Tomaso presented it. Had Novini recognized the likeness, would he not have instantly inferred that Carlo was intended to be imposed on him as his own child? Might it not have implicated us in the

plot

plot and doomed your nephew to penury? Fortunately for us, either the resemblance is slight, or his subsequent misfortunes have erased all resemblance of your sister. At present I foresee no danger either from the portrait or the dagger; yet in such a momentous affair I wished to guard not only against the probability, but the possibility, of detection."

" What you have mentioned," replied Lorenzo, " will prove of most essential service to our design. The miniature, indeed, might have ruined us, but as the villain has forgotten the victim of his baseness, it may, if he believe it to have been intended for Carlo's mother, increase his regard for him; particularly as he seemed averse to adopt an heir from a mean family. Then, mark how the dagger favours us. The inquisitive spirit of that devil, Tomaso, will doubtless induce him to visit the ruins before we can remove my bloody habit, which I thought proper to leave there. Now, the unfavourable suspicions this discovery may raise will quickly be dispelled by the story of my being way-laid and stripped. The count will suppose the pretend-

ed robber was the owner of the dagger, and the person Tomaso pursued into the recesses."

"Very well observed. Yet there still remains the task of vamping up a story to satisfy the count and his shrewd inquisitor, relative to my suspicious appearance at the ruins."

Leaving them to pursue their vile machinations, we shall return to our humble philosopher.

As Lorenzo predicted, Tomaso could not rest till he had revisited the ruins, to discover how his antagonist had eluded his search. The clothes left by Lorenzo first engaged his attention. Hastily turning them over, he perceived several streaks of blood. He trembled; his countenance expressing horror and virtuous indignation.

"Oh, ye holy saints!" exclaimed he "here has certainly been murder. To be sure that could not be easily proved. I dare say it would puzzle Father Paul himself, for all his circles and squares, to know, from this blood, whether the owner has been killed, or only wounded. It is a great pity that truth is so difficult to be found;

found ; but that may be because there are so many lies. Ah," added he, bundling the clothes under his arm, " I wish I had been as successful last night, as I was when waiting to cut mistletoe by the light of the moon."

He then ran homewards to blaze abroad his adventure, and not a little proud of his success. Having admittance to his master at all hours, he hastened to his chamber with the bundle. Novini awoke at his entrance, and peevishly inquired what was the matter.

" Oh, Signore ! Look what I have found among the ruins. This is a priest's robe. I wish some of the Carthusians are not at the bottom of last night's work."

At these words, Novini, with a spirit Tomaso had, of late, seldom witnessed, raised himself to examine the bundle.

" This is not a Carthusian's habit," said he. " Their peculiar distinction is wanting."

Marco and Beatrice, hearing of the discovery, now came to join in the examination, and to offer their advice. Marco was now of opinion that the habit belonged

ed

ed to some Infidel spy, and advised his son-in-law to plant cannon on the walls, and to observe a strict fast in the family to disappoint the enemy's designs! Tomaso, not approving the project of fasting, was going to question its utility, but was prevented by Beatrice. She urged the propriety of placing the clothes on a column by the road side.

“ Then, nephew! should the miscreant pass that way, and peruse the soul-harrowing inscription which I will cause to be placed upon it, he will not be able to conceal his guilty emotions. The black choler of his breast will be disclosed!”

Novini paid little attention to their several plans, so much was his mind occupied by the idea Tomaso had suggested of Niccolo's being concerned in the late events. His suspicious loitering near the recess seemed like collusion, and from him the first hint of adoption was derived. “ Nay,” thought he, “ might not Madalena's last admonition have the monk for its object?” On the other hand his established character for piety, and the difficulty of accounting for such conduct on

any

any motives of interest or ambition, held the balance in suspense. In this state of wavering conjecture and painful incertitude, made doubly perplexing by the opposite counsels of his family, he had more cause than ever to regret the absence of Vignolo, whose warm friendship, clear judgment, and indefatigable exertion in the promotion of justice, rendered him a proper person to search the mystery to the bottom.

“ Oh! man, man,” cried the count, “ Does distress bear hard upon thee? Struggle not for relief; that will only increase thy misery. Thus, by wishing for an heir, I have doubled my distress.”

Tomaso, who was philosophizing at the window, glad of an opportunity to check his master’s gloomy apostrophe, now said,

“ Oh, Signore! I see Father Niccolo.”

“ Are you sure of that?” said the count anxiously.

“ Yes, that I am, Signore. I should soon give you the proof positive if I thought I had time for a few majors and minors, *secundum artem*, before Niccolo himself made it as plain as a pike-staff.”

“ Then

"Then he is certainly innocent," said Novini.

"Aye, master, or as cunning as Doctor Faustus."

Father Niccolo now entered, fully determined to have the first word. This advantage, his confederate's habit, which lay near the door, afforded him.

"Ha!" cried he, "you have then already heard of the atrocious deed? Ah, my son, who shall now wonder at your severe, but beautiful, exclamations against mankind? Shame, shame to a christian land! What could the Infidels have done more than stripped a servant of God and left him for dead? Poor Lorenzo! But, thanks to our Holy Mother! he still lives."

"If this be Lorenzo's habit," said Novini, "how comes it to want the distinguishing mark of your order?"

Niccolo was struck at the coolness of this remark, and the omission of his usual respectful appellation. Composing his countenance, he began to examine the clothes.

"Your

“ Your observation, my son, is right. These cannot have belonged to my poor friend. Doubtless the cruel robbers have murdered one of another order, before they encountered my worthy brother. Why this was left behind, it would be vain to conjecture, as the slightest circumstance can confound and render inconsistent the actions of guilt.” Here he approached nearer Novini and whispered.

“ I have something to relate of importance to your welfare, connected with this affair, and which it may be imprudent to repeat before all these witnesses.”

Surprised at this, the count, under a devotional pretence, desired to be left alone with the monk.

The room being cleared, “ Now, my son,” said the artful priest, as he took his patron’s hand, “ I desire to know whether you have an enemy? I put the question wrong. Every good man has enemies. I mean, have you one who would willingly venture his own life to make you miserable?”

“ Truly, father, I know of none whose hatred is so deadly. Once, indeed, I had such

such an enemy in Gonfalvo di Rizambo, whom you have heard me speak of; but I have nothing now to fear from him."

"He is dead then?" inquired Niccolo, with evident emotion.

"I have every reason to believe it, except beholding the murderous wretch in his coffin. Whence arise these unaccountable interrogations?"

"From a regard for your safety, here and hereafter. Are you sure, my son, that Tomaso's affection for your person and family is sincere?"

"Sure of his sincerity!" repeated the count with increased surprise. "If he be faithless, fidelity is banished for ever from the walks of man. I have had innumerable proofs of it."

"And yet, my son, you may have been deceived; for, with submission I speak it, your easy disposition renders you peculiarly liable to deception. Remember that he who has been faithful in ten thousand instances may at length be corrupted. After remaining pure for ages, Satan fell!"

"To the point, good father."

"I will;

“ I will ; and should my suspicions be wide of the truth, yet, I trust you know me too well to believe that I would make so serious a charge without due foundation. But hear and judge for yourself. Last night, soon after I left your hospitable roof, I, according to my usual practice when in solitude, dropped into a profound meditation, from which nothing terrestrial had power to attract me, until I reached the ruins. Then, to my shame I confess it, I suddenly stopped. Unusual fear oppressed me. I turned to go back to the castle, expecting every moment the heretic murderer would spring upon me. I had not gone far, however, until I reflected on the ill example my absence would hold up to my brethren at the convent, the mistrust it would evince of the divine power which had hitherto protected me, and that my cowardice might even deprive me of the favour of my inestimable patron. By such reflections I acquired courage once more to face the ruins. After a fervent prayer, my timidity vanished, a courageous zeal inspired me, and I determined to enter the most secret recess to search

out

out the person Tomaso had seen enter, and endeavour, through the divine aid, to lead him into the paths of eternal life. Alas ! he is given up to perdition. I was denied the blessing of meeting with him. Once I thought I heard groans, but that might be only fancy. I was in that state of tranquillity, which a sense of having performed our duty imparts, and which I doubt not you have always felt, after benefiting the holy church, when I was suddenly seized behind. At first I imagined he was the wretch I wished to behold. Judge my astonishment on finding it was your servant Tomaso who had thus rudely molested me ! Peter was also with him. My emotions at this discovery were so strong that I almost lost the powers of speech. I fully believed they were in league with the villain whom Tomaso had pretended to pursue. His readiness in mounting the garden-wall, and his safe return from following such a blood-thirsty monster, almost prove a clandestine collusion between them. Whether Peter was not so hard-hearted as his companion, or Providence had subdued their evil passions, I know not, but they

they suffered me to depart without injury. To increase my horror, I found on my return to the convent, that my dearest friend Lorenzo lay at the point of death, having been wounded and stripped by banditti near the ruins. The chief object of this early visit is to examine Tomaso and Peter relative to their suspicious appearance at that time and place. Perhaps they have been hired by some person to complete your ruin.

This very artful harangue completely removed Novini's suspicions of the monk.

"Oh, good father, you rise in my esteem every hour. I had foolishly begun to suspect—but let that pass. You are innocent, Tomaso is innocent, Peter is innocent. I sent Tomaso, poor fellow! to see whether you had met with any accident. Each of you has mistaken the other for the lurking assassin. Here is another cause of human wretchedness. Tho' Vice be always productive of misery, Virtue does not always promote happiness. If both Vice and Virtue produce evil, who, then, in this life, can be happy? Even my regard for your safety might have

been

been dangerous to us all. I would willingly give half my fortune to discover the villain, and the cause of his enmity to the poor child."

"That's true, my son. I hope the boy is well. Still asleep, I suppose? Poor fellow! he needs it after his recent distresses."

Every thing being thus cleared up, the count became more serene, and the artful priest unusually cheerful. Carlo and Laura were now admitted. Laura flew to her father's arms. Novini seemed not indifferent to her warm caresses; but the stranger, though in person far inferior, seemed to engross the greater share of his affection. Of this, novelty, and his suspicions of Maddalena's fidelity, were the predisposing causes.

Vignolo returned that same evening. Tomaso was on the watch to inform him of the recent strange events, and to desire him to hasten to speak logic to his master. As the whole had commenced and finished during his short absence, Vignolo could not avoid imbibing a portion of the honest domestic's suspicions. Regretting his friend's blind confidence, he attempt-

ed by mild persuasions to wean him from his project of adoption. He was too well acquainted with Novini's disposition, strenuously to oppose his design, and too much interested in Laura's welfare, to make the continuance of their ancient friendship depend on a compliance with his wishes. With much difficulty the count was brought to consent that he would, for a year, delay the completion of his design, when it would probably be known what success was likely to attend their united endeavours to discover Carlo's connexions.

---

## CHAP. XXII.

*" ——— With devotion's visage  
And pious action, we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself."*

SHAKESPEARE.

A TWELVEMONTH elapsed. Novini received no intelligence of Carlo's parentage. Believing that none related to him existed, or that they had utterly disclaimed him, he, with his sovereign's permission

sion, adopted him, gave him the family name, and introduced him to his connexions as his heir. With this step the whole household were displeased ; Laura, who was the perfect image of their late beloved mistress, being an universal favourite. Bianca was not sparing of her censures. While the impression was recent, she would often say to her fellow servants, as her darling Laura was romping about,—“ My master must surely have lost his senses when he adopted such a boy as Carlo to hurt that little angel.”

They, however, treated Carlo with respect, lest the count should discharge them. But all was hollow. Nothing came from the heart. Nor, as he grew up, were his manners and disposition at all adapted to inspire attachment on his own account.

The count early observed his favourite domestic’s aversion to his plan, and condescended to attempt to remove it.

“ I am only trying a philosophical experiment,” said he, “ on the development of human intellect, the growth of the passions, and the progress of virtue.”

G 2

“ Nay,”

“ Nay,” thought Tomaso, “ if this be only an experiment, I shall not obstruct it. No! I have too much regard for the seven sciences. I’ll be neuter. Yet he is a bad subject to work upon. Too much like Niccolo, I am afraid, to do any good. This experiment will end like the man’s attempting to turn rubbish into gold, which my master Paul used to speak of. He tried, till he was tired, then threw the dirt away. Yes, yes, Carlo will soon be set off in a tangent.”

But honest Marco’s piety was insufficient to restrain his chagrin on finding so little regard was paid to his dear Maddalena, as to yield her daughter’s rights to a stranger. Beatrice, on the contrary, was soon reconciled to the plan, which was likely to gratify her taste for the romantic.

Henri, Vignolo’s eldest son, often accompanied his father to the castle. Laura ever hailed his appearance with joy. Companions in all the sports of childhood, they soon became inseparable. Hoping the introduction of Carlo would add spirit to

to their amusements, they at first rejoiced; but his unamiable selfish disposition, which gradually unfolded, early convinced them he was an obstacle to their happiness. Complaints of his conduct were frequently laid before the count; but Carlo, by an artful recrimination of his companions, or disguise of circumstances, seldom failed to bring himself off, not only with safety, but honour. Indeed, it early appeared to be his sole aim to make others resemble what himself was in reality. Niccolo and Lorenzo, who seemed much interested in his welfare, were also ever ready to palliate his early indications of an evil bias; and were more solicitous to evince the necessity of concealment, than of having nothing to conceal. Some childish luxury Niccolo would often bestow as the reward of his successful evasions, which cherished his cunning, selfish spirit. Sweet waters could not flow from so corrupt a fountain.

Novini was desirous that Carlo should believe him to be his own father, and had desired his household not to give him any other information. This prohibition To-  
mafo

maso took particular care to inculcate on the minds of his fellow servants.

“While Carlo,” said he, “believes himself my master’s natural heir, he will be more likely by some arrogant unphilosophical step, to incur his high displeasure, than if he know himself to be only a foundling.”

But the Confederate Carthusians, by their secret intimations, defeated this fine project. Indeed Carlo himself early inferred there was something mysterious about him. He still retained a faint remembrance of his first reception at the castle, and once, when he behaved rudely to Laura, a taunt from the enraged Henri tended to tear aside the veil. Already envying Henri’s evident superiority, this strengthened his dislike, and he eagerly embraced every opportunity of lessening him in the good opinion of his friends. His malice was often rendered ineffectual by Tomaso, who was so fond of Henri, and so frequently puzzled by his childish questions, that he believed he would prove as great a philosopher as Aristotle, or even Father Paul himself.

At

At first view, it appeared as if the tempers of these juvenile rivals, for such they may be already considered, were formed in the same mould; but an attentive observer might have perceived a striking difference. Both, it is true, were of a serious contemplative turn. But in Henri it was the effect of modest diffidence, and desire of obtaining instruction; in Carlo, of sullen haughtiness, tempered by prudential artifice. Only independence was wanting to make his manners correspond with the baseness of his heart. Laura, even while unconscious of his having intruded on her rights and fortune, could not endure him. Her grandfather took no care to conceal his aversion. Henri's was also well known. She therefore readily followed the example of those she loved. Father Niccolo and his confederate were, however, his firm friends. Desirous of having him more under their influence, they solicited and obtained the direction of his education; but Novini would not suffer him to remain altogether absent from the castle. The love of justice, also prompted him no longer to allow Laura to be educated solely under

under the care of his romantic aunt, who, insensible of the pernicious tendency of her peculiar notions, would be apt to imprint them on the tender mind of her charge. "False ideas of life," thought he, "will paralyze the little energy we still retain to escape the errors, the snares, the tempests with which this miserable world abounds."

Observing him indulge these just reflections, Vignolo caused his lady to accompany him on his next visit to the castle. The subject of education was started, and managed so well on the part of Signora Vignolo, that the count committed his daughter to her protection. By her care and example the first shoots of such virtues and accomplishments as became her sex and station, were implanted in her breast. Laura and Henri were delighted with this change, as it gave them the opportunity of enjoying their juvenile pleasures without interruption. Her excursions to the castle were still frequent; and, by express desire of her devout grandfather, who thought himself peculiarly well qualified to superintend her religious duties, on Sundays and other holidays she resided wholly at

her

her father's. A change the less irksome, as she really loved her parent, and her favourite playmate was always a welcome visitor. At such times, Beatrice, who was highly offended at being thought incapable

To rear the tender thought,  
To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
would lead Henri and her niece to the *seat*  
*of heavenly musing*, and endeavour to incul-  
cate all her high-flown sentiments of deli-  
cacy and decorum. They seemed to set  
little value on her counsels; would yawn  
when the good woman was most earnest,  
and would sometimes laugh at their ro-  
mantic teacher, when liberated from her  
lectures. But their laugh was that of good  
humour, not of satirical malice. On the  
whole, Beatrice's interference was advan-  
tageous to the formation of Laura's char-  
acter, as, without being opposed, she  
might have servilely copied the manners of  
her instructress. To a reflecting mind, a  
little singularity is, perhaps, more pleas-  
ing, than a close adherence to form and  
custom, where every motion is according  
to rule, and every word mechanical. The  
originality of the former bespeaks genius;

the latter degrades human beings to mere automata. The virtues of Signora Vig-nolo were passive rather than active; her accomplishments, the result of patience and indefatigable application. Thus in every kind of needle work, and music, as far as depended on memory and practice, she was well qualified to instruct. But to discover the path to which genius pointed, and to assist its progress, far surpassed her abilities. Beatrice's direct contradiction of her rival teacher's sentiments arose, indeed, more from the mere spirit of opposition, than a conviction of their impropriety; but Laura was thus taught to exercise her own judgment, and to elicit truth from different opinions. To be like Henri was her highest ambition. To resemble Laura was Henri's aim. Their progress in learning was therefore for some time equal. Tomaso was so struck with their childish fondness, that he would often doubt whether they had more than one soul between them; but their wit, activity, and aptitude to master his philosophy caused him to waver in that opinion.

“ Does

soft

“ Does not all our understanding lie in the soul ? ” said he to himself. “ Then how can half a soul retain as much wisdom as a whole one ? No ! that is impossible. I might as well say, if I cut my hat in two, I should have two hats. But Laura and Henri have each of them more sense and a finer taste for the sciences than any children five miles round. Ergo, each of them has, at least, a whole soul.”

Hitherto the hours of Laura had flown untarnished by misfortune. But the time now approached when her happiness was to be overclouded by the death of her dear grandfather, then far advanced in years. He died of a lingering illness, which he endured with great fortitude. His greatest anxiety, as he drew near his end, arose from indecision respecting the place of his burial. Sometimes he inclined to be buried in Venice, the holy patrimony of his blessed namesake : then he would think it much better to repose with his beloved “ countess daughter.” The latter at length predominated.

“ My dear Laura,” said he, “ will love to shed a tear on my grave. If my bones lie

lie so far from her dear mother's, God knows whether she will remember her honoured grandfather! It is not good to disturb the dead, or I would remove my dear Maddalena's coffin to Venice. This place is not worthy of her bones."

His confidence in Saint Mark continued unabated to the last, and enabled him to face the grisly king with a cheerful countenance. Can philosophy do more? Excepting a few legacies, his whole property was bequeathed to his grand-daughter. Vignolo was appointed her guardian. To honest Tomaso he left a considerable sum, his respectful attachment to Laura having overcome the dislike his proofs and demonstrations had at first inspired. To Father Niccolo he returned the inestimable relic of the hair of that ass on which Christ rode into Jerusalem. The monk received it with well-acted joy, saying, the worthy old man knew his aversion to the vile dross of this world. Offended by Novini's late conduct, Marco did not distinguish him in his will. For Carlo, nothing could be expected.

Tomaso,

Tomafo, now master of a sum competent to his wishes, thought himself fit to be the head of a family, and able to bring up a race of philosophers. He therefore made his proposals to Bianca, who was not so obdurate as to reject his *conclusum*. Having obtained his master's consent, they were soon after married. Tomafo, however, still retained his place in the family. In fact, the count was so accustomed to his manner, and entertained by his oddities, that he knew not how to relinquish him. A small neat house was erected at the head of the garden for the honest domestic. At his own desire it was raised only one story, that he might not wear out his shoes by running up and down stairs, or incur the danger of breaking the neck of an embryo philosopher! If the conventional colleagues be excepted, all who knew him rejoiced at his prosperity. Even with Beatrice, he was again become such a favourite that she honoured his marriage with her presence, and composed a most sublime epithalamium. Many circumstances concurred to effect this change. On an alarm of fire, Tomafo, forgetting all animosity, ran to her

her study to save the *Golden Book* in the Vulcanian repository, from the flames. Little damage was sustained. But he proved, in a very logical manner, that if the fire had not been discovered in time, the whole castle might have been burnt to the ground. He then, with great deference to her superior judgment, hinted that, if, like her, he expected to derive so much glory from any work, he would have several copies taken and placed in different parts, that no such accident might deprive posterity of the pleasure of perusing it. She thanked him for his care, and that very day began the painful task of transcription. Her progress was exceedingly slow, so many new thoughts and alterations occurred. Still this service might have proved ineffectual to restore Tomaso to favour, had not her silver lock ceased to remind her of his experimental philosophy; Time having now scattered his frowns in such profusion that it was no longer supereminent in whiteness. Amidst these material alterations in his family, Novini, contrary to the opinions of his friends and the hopes of his enemies, remained nearly in the same state.

state. For, although his limbs were infirm, the vital principle was not without vigour ; his sedentary situation being more prejudicial to his health, than the ill effects arising immediately from his wound. His querulous complaints of the calamities incident to mortality were, at times, as bitter and vehement as ever. But, on the whole, it was apparent that the increasing attractions of his children soothed his discontented spirit, and rendered them less frequent. Occasionally much of his former energy would dart through the obscuring clouds, particularly when devising plans for his children's welfare, and instructing them how to profit by them.

Nothing occurred during the tender years of Laura, Henri, and Carlo, worthy of relation, unless it be the following juvenile adventure, in which Carlo's malignancy, Niccolo's artifice, and Novini's blind affection, were strikingly displayed.

Among the prisoners, unjustly detained by the duke of Calabria after the surrender of Otranto, was found a Christian of the Greek persuasion, who, affirming that he had been forced to bear arms against the

Cross,

Cross, obtained his liberty. His name was Alexis Prongli. Averse from returning to his native island, then in imminent danger from the Infidels, he remained in Italy. Being a stranger, and without money, poverty stared him in the face. In this extremity, he luckily bethought himself of following the sublime art of physic. His long beard, his strange language, his singular manners, soon procured him several patients, and, in the country villages, he passed for a most profound son of Galen. To the art of healing, he occasionally added that of fortune-telling, in which he had equal skill and success. In fact, because less burdensome to his conscience, he preferred predictions to prescriptions. From village to village he travelled with his nostrums, and after many changes from want to opulence, came into Novini's neighbourhood. Tomafo no sooner saw him, than, struck by his strange appearance, and believing him a second Hippocrates, he introduced him to his master. Alexis, suffering from a reverse of fortune, and knowing he could lose no credit in failing where so many had failed before him

him, intimated that he could restore the count to health. Ever ready to embrace the least hope of attaining his former powers, Novini grasped at the illusion, and became the patient of Alexis. Scarcely had he swallowed the first prescription, ere he was so powerfully affected, that the family were in despair, believing he was poisoned. Tomaso, with bitter imprecations on long beards and Greeks, hastened to secure the physician, vowing, if his dear master expired, that he would make him swallow all the bottles in his budget. Alexis had decamped with his introductory fee, but the philosopher overtook him, and brought him back in triumph. As he led him to his master, he attempted to prove, in his usual clear syllogistic method, that the prisoner's foreign accent and beard were counterfeit, and that he belonged to the gang of poisoners then notorious in France. The poor Greek denied the charge, and, falling on his knees, implored pardon. He declared that want had induced him to practise physic, and that he knew of no other medicine than a preparation of opium. Feeling himself much easier, the count gave

gave him, but hesitated to throw him back on the wide world.

“ What shall I do with this poor wretch ? ” thought he. “ Again enable him to increase the dreadful catalogue of human misery ? Ah ! no. I should then be accessory to his crimes. On me would descend the curses of those made widows and orphans by his ignorance. If I cannot make him a valuable, I, at least, may make him an innocent, member of society.”

Learning that Alexis had, in his own country, superintended the cultivation of flowers, he offered to retain him in that capacity.—About this period, garden-flowers were introduced into Italy by the Greeks, who were driven by Mahomet from the banks of the Propontis. The taste was new. At first, novelty, and afterwards, pleasure, caused Novini to spare no expence to manifest his superiority in a pursuit to which his powers were still adequate. Alexis, happy at the prospect of securing a safe haven, where his battered bark might ride in safety, thankfully accepted the count’s offer, and by his skill in rearing flowers indigenous to his native clime,

clime, soon made Novini's parterre the boast of the neighbourhood. With Laura, who was passionately fond of flowers, and Tomaso, who loved to ask questions about the state of the seven sciences in Greece, he became a particular favourite.

From one of his countrymen, whom he found means to inform of his situation, Alexis obtained a selection of plants of peculiar beauty, and such as had seldom been seen before in Italy. A few tulip sets formed part of the selection, but only three were found fit for propagation. This precise number induced Novini to give one to each of the juvenile trio. In a small spot, deemed their own property, and fondly distinguished by the name of flower-garden, Laura and Henri planted their tulips. Alexis directed their efforts. In due time the tender leaves put forth, and filled the children's hearts with joy. Every day now seemed to increase the brilliance, variety, and harmony of their colours. Unfortunately, Carlo's bulb rose in plain simplicity. No gay contrasted tints, no elegance of form attracted the eye. It was low, and of an uniform pale yellow. A passion for

flowers

flowers is, perhaps, incompatible with a vicious disposition. It seems to require a pure soul, and a feeling heart, fully to enjoy such calm delights. On the rugged and violent they make no impression. The *Æolian* harp yields melody to the tender zephyr, but Boreas alone can disturb the silence of a bass viol. Thus Carlo cared not for flowers, and would gladly have exchanged the finest ornament of the parterre for a sugar plumb. Example, and fear of offending the count, were his only inducements for taking any care of his tulip. He could not, however, witness Henri and Laura's delight, without extreme envy and vexation. Their smiles of pleasure his ingenious jealousy construed into mockery at his failure, and triumph at their own success. His envious displeasure did not escape the notice of his companions. One evening, when visiting their tulips, they encountered Carlo. Laura, pitying his evident uneasiness, took him kindly by the hand.

“ Come cheer up,” said she. “ You know it is not mine, nor yet Henri's fault, that your flower has not all the colours of the

the rainbow. You shall have one of the best sets ours may produce, which, Alexis says, will not be long, they grow so charmingly."

" Do you think," said Carlo, sulkily, and putting her hand rudely away, " that I am such a baby as to mind your paltry flowers? I want none of them. What are they good for?"

" Ha! poor fox!" cried Henri, laughing. " You can't jump high enough. " Eh! four as crabs?"

Away ran the happy children, hand in hand, shouting with heart-felt glee, " Sour as crabs. Sour as crabs."

Carlo was now so thoroughly provoked, that he would have instantly destroyed the flowers, had not the light rendered detection almost unavoidable. He therefore followed Henri and Laura to the castle, and met them as if all was forgotten. But as soon as the shades of night gathered round, he stole into the garden, approached the envied tulips, and trod them to the earth. Happily the fiend-like act was not without a witness. Alexis, deeply affected with the prevailing superstition, was waiting for

the

the proper periods, as predicted by the vain science of astrology, for gathering herbs possessing their full virtue, when Carlo's footsteps awakened his curiosity. He watched the intruder's motions in silence. No sooner was the guilty deed completed, than the indignant Greek burst from his concealment, and seized Carlo. Thunderstruck, conscious of having broken Niccolo's repeated injunctions, the culprit lost his haughty assurance, his eyes were fixed with fear, and he remained rooted to the spot. He entreated Alexis in the most abject manner, and by every possible inducement, to spare him; but the Greek, true to his master's interest, continued to drag him forward to answer for his crime.

He had just reached the garden-gate when Carlo, exerting all his strength, suddenly broke loose, and ran towards the Carthusian convent, knowing from experience, that if a reconciliation should ever be effected with the count, it would depend on Niccolo's artifice and powerful intercession. Alexis, vexed at the criminal's escape, pursued, but could not overtake him. On his return he called upon his

his friend Tomaso, to relate the occurrence, and inquire whether his master should be immediately informed of it.

“ Oh,” cried Tomaso eagerly, “ we must not lose a moment. In things of this nature, as in the seven sciences, a moment often proves of great importance. My master’s experiment on human intellect is finished for ever, as we can now give him the proof positive of his favourite’s malignant baseness.”

“ I think Carlo cannot shew his face after this discovery,” said Alexis.

“ Oh ! Alexis, it is a rare discovery. It glads my very heart, Primo, because it pleases me : secundo, because I love justice: tertio, because it assures me that Carlo will not again pass our barbican. I would almost give up my philosophy, and my experiments, to have the villain banished from Italy.”

“ Banishment is too light a punishment,” said Alexis. “ I wonder what the poor little dears will say when they miss their beloved flowers in the morning. It will break their hearts.”

"I'll be at hand to comfort them," said Tomaso. "Henri is a sharp lad, and I will demonstrate *secundum artem*, that the loss of the tulips may be the best thing that ever happened to him. If I convince him, he will soon convince Laura, for they love one another dearly, and I hope yet to see——"

Here the bell from the castle tolled eight.

"Let us run," said Alexis, "or the Signore will be asleep."

Without one alleviating circumstance, they related the whole adventure to Novini.

"What!" cried he, with emotion, "my boy, my sober steady boy, who bid fair to be an honour to religion, commit an action so detestable! No, by our holy faith! it is impossible."

"No, Signore, it is not impossible, as may thus be demonstrated. What is impossible can never happen, neither in this world nor the next. But this has happened. Ergo, it is not impossible!"

"I give him up for ever," continued Novini, regardless of Tomaso's syllogism. "His flight declares his guilt. At other times, as if emboldened by conscious virtue,

tue, he has braved the severest scrutiny. This crime cannot be pardoned. It gratified no childish fancy or appetite ; nor was it the effect of sudden passion. Sheer malice, and a depraved soul, inspired that deed of deliberate villainy. Oh human nature ! Sin and misery are thy portion. But I will visit the spot myself. Mine own eyes shall convince me of the fact. Deception is powerful. The wisest of mortals are prone to error. The flowers may be still flourishing."

Tomaso not being able to prove the contrary, called for a torch, and, assisted by Alexis, carried his master into the garden. The flowers were found crushed into the soil, and the print of a small foot was still visible. All his doubts were removed. He sorrowfully returned to his chamber, declaiming against the world, and regretting his disappointment. The result of his painful reflections was, immediately to reverse the steps taken in behalf of his unworthy favourite.

Carlo, mean time, reached the convent almost exhausted. Niccolo, greatly alarmed at his pupil's pale and disordered aspect,

led him to Lorenzo's cell, which was at some distance from the others.

" My dear boy," said he, " what is the matter?"

Carlo hung his head, and remained silent.

" What am I to think of this?" repeated the monk. " Why come you at this late hour? Is the count taken ill?"

" No. But——" Here he stopped in confusion.

" But what? Speak! Let me know the worst."

Carlo then related his recent adventure, without any material deviation from truth. Sullen and haughty displeasure clouded his countenance, as he revealed his crime; but no tear of penitence, or shame, closed the recital.

" We are undone," said Lorenzo. In one moment are the labour and contrivance of years destroyed."

" I fear so," replied Niccolo. " How often, boy, have you been cautioned against the indiscreet indulgence of such passions!"

" I thought

" I thought nobody would discover it," said Carlo.

" I wonder," whispered Lorenzo, " where the boy acquired such a temper. Not from his mother I'm sure. Never was there a woman more amiable. As for his father, Novini, though I shall ever detest the traitor, yet justice obliges me to confess that he seems incapable of an act so base, so vile, so mean, so cowardly, as this of Carlo. By the by, Niccolo, he is almost your counterpart. His lurking in the dark for revenge reminds me of your detection in a still less worthy exploit. But times are changed, so I shall spare you."

" Changed indeed!" repeated Niccolo with asperity, " when the sensitive Lorenzo becomes the panegyrist of the betrayer of his sister, and the slanderer of his only friend."

" Well, perhaps it was wrong to recur to past events, when the present demand our most serious attention. Carlo deserves punishment, and, notwithstanding his affinity to me, I can resign him to his fate."

The last sentence was spoken in an under tone of voice. " But will he alone suffer?

Are not we implicated in his downfall? Unless this action be palliated, the count knowing that we have endeavoured to clear him from former accusations, and given him the best of characters, will suspect that we have been interested in his advancement. Nay, with Vignolo's assistance he may even discover the truth."

" Then we may as well have the merit of confession, as the shame of detection. When Novini finds he is really the father of Carlo, if he do not take him again into favour, his generosity will surely allow him a respectable maintenance."

" Would your seal your own ruin?" exclaimed Niccolo. " *My* safety you seem to regard not. Can we expect pardon if Novini discover our deliberate deception, in which every thing he deems sacred has been profaned? His rage will be uncontrollable, to find that he has laid open his heart to his bitterest enemy, solely that the spot might be chosen to inflict the mortal wound. Mark the consequences of a premature confession. His suspicions of Laura's illegitimacy will vanish. The full tide of affections will flow towards her, and Carlo,

your

your nephew, the son of your injured sister, even if acknowledged for his son, will be banished with ignominy. But have you such confidence in your powers as to suppose you can persuade Novini that Carlo is his son? The proofs, if such they may be styled, are slight indeed. Think you he will believe a self-acknowledged impostor? No, trust me, Lorenzo, you will expose yourself for no end. He will imagine you are preparing a second plan to deceive, because the first was found untenable. With Carlo, we must stand or fall. We have gone too far to retreat with safety."

Lorenzo now owned the necessity of concealment, but declared he could perceive no method of escaping the rising storm. Their conversation being carried on in a low voice, and several parts rather hinted than expressed, Carlo, who was somewhat drowsy, did not understand its purport. After undergoing a severe reproof, he was put to bed in Lorenzo's cell. The Confederates passed the whole night in concerting the means of restoring him to favour. About day-break Niccolo started an expedient, which promised success, and Carlo

Carlo was instantly roused that he might be grounded in the part it was necessary for him to perform.

“ If you now behave with common prudence,” said the monk, “ I will bring you off with honour, and you shall still triumph over master Henri. But beware of a second indiscretion.”

Carlo, pleased with the latter motive for obedience, readily promised to do whatever was required. At the conclusion of the morning service, the “ minister of fraud” took his pupil by the hand, and commenced his customary visit to Novini. When arrived near the castle, he placed Carlo behind a large tree, and commanded him not to move until he was called upon. The first person Niccolo saw was Tomaso, of whom he inquired after Novini’s health.

“ Oh, father, my master is very ill. I warrant you know the reason of it, as Carlo last night ran off to your——”

“ I must not listen to you,” interrupted the monk, “ when your master may be wanting comfort for his poor soul.”

“ Would to Heaven,” muttered Tomaso, “ that you could demonstrate your poor soul to be as rich!”

As the artful confessor expected, Novini's first question was concerning Carlo."

" What, reverend father, do you now think of that serpent I have been so long cherishing ?"

" My son, whom do you mean ?"

" Mean ! Did not Carlo fly to you last night for protection ? Have you yet to be informed that the boy, whom I esteemed as a gift from heaven, has proved an imp of hell !"

" The blessed Virgin forbid !" ejaculated the monk as he made the sign of the cross. " Whence comes this sudden change ? What new illusions have the powers of darkness raised ?"

Novini, with evident marks of abhorrence, and mournful exclamations against human frailty, now related the transactions of the preceding night.

" Now," concluded he, " what is your opinion of this " child of grace," whom you alledged bid fair to rival the brightest saint in the kalendar ?"

" My son, I see no reason to alter my sentiments."

" Do

“ Do I hear aright? Have you, a minister of truth, not one word of reprobation for a deed so diabolical?”

“ Not one, my son. My love for him is undiminished.”

“ Merciful powers! Then, father, your soul is as base as your pupil’s, and from this moment I have done with you both. Good God! to love one debased by an act so fiend-like.”

“ Say, rather, he is ennobled by the deed.”

“ What new mystery is afloat?” said the astonished count. “ Fallible as is humanity, I cannot here have been deceived.”

“ Ah, my son! Learn to be less confident in your judgment. Well may you declaim against the fallibility of man, when you yourself are so liable to err. Know, if any criminality attach to the act of destroying two trifling flowers, to me it belongs. Carlo was only my instrument.”

“ Astonishing! How, how can you justify yourself?”

“ By

“ By weighty reasons, my son. Ever since the tulips were given to the children, they have been extremely remiss in their devotions. Of the hymns which, by your order, I desired them to commit to memory, they have retained scarcely one stanza. To punish such neglect appeared my incumbent duty; but I knew not what punishment was applicable to their crime, and I did not wish to disturb your repose. While thinking on the subject with the holy gospels open before me, I chanced to glance on the following verse. ‘ If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.’ I hailed the text as a decision from heaven, and determined, that as by the flowers the children had sinned, from them should arise their punishment. And as Carlo, whom you know has just commenced the soul-healing practice of confession, had owned himself guilty of a neglect of duty, I ordered him, as a penance, to destroy those flowers whose attractions were leading two souls into the paths of perdition. He entreated me to enjoin some other penance, feelingly representing that as he was not in perfect cordiality with Laura

and Henri, his obedience would be imputed to malice. ‘ Nay,’ added he with tears in his eyes, ‘ even my dear father will not love me as before.’—I freely confess, my son, that I repented of my command. But, as it was his first penitential, I dared not yield to his entreaties, lest he should lose that salutary subjection due to the ambassadors of God. Convinced at length that the children’s salvation might depend upon his obedience, he acquired sufficient resolution to fulfil my command, and cleanse his own soul.”

This artful fabrication, founded on a perfect knowledge of Novini’s character, occasioned a total revolution of sentiment.

“ How have I been deceived !” exclaimed the count. “ Where is now the child ? If innocent, why did he fly in such a manner ?”

“ I am surprised, greatly surprised, my son, that you, above all men, should ask that question. Do you not perceive that to know himself innocent, and yet incur the opprobrium of guilt, constituted the very marrow of Carlo’s merit, the very spirit of his penitence ?”

“ Enough

“Enough, enough, good father. Where's the poor boy?”

Niccolo now gave the promised signal, and Carlo started from his lurking place. Novini's judgment was so overclouded by the superstition of the times, that he received Carlo with more than usual affection. Thus encouraged, his vicious inclinations daily increased. But his dependence on the count, the remembrance of his narrow escape, and the continual cautions of Niccolo, who about this time informed him of his real claim on Novini's protection, restrained their indulgence. This forbearance proved, however, like the calmness of a volcano, which imparts a false security, even while the reservoirs of fire are collecting to burst forth.

“With hideous ruin and combustion.”

Niccolo, exulting in his success, was leaving the castle, when he again met Tomaso. The honest servant was indeed waiting for his departure; and although he believed the monk's unusual cheerfulness was an evident demonstration of Carlo's acquittal, he yet ventured, by way of knowing

knowing the particulars, to inquire what was to be his punishment. Niccolo condescended to relate the result of his late conference.

“ But, holy father,” said Tomaso, “ can you prove you yourself have done right? I have heard both my masters say, that no man ought to do evil, in hopes that good may arise from it.”

“ This fellow is more shrewd than his master,” said Niccolo.—“ With regard to common men, Tomaso, this maxim may, perhaps, be found and salutary; but, to the servants of the church, who stand as it were between men and angels, it must sometimes yield. Religion, before morality, claims our obedience. In holy writ, how many, without reprehension, infringed on this apparently just precept. Was not Jacob applauded for depriving Esau of his blessing and birthright? Did not the sons of Israel spoil the Egyptians? And, Oh thou despiser of sacred things! did not even the blessed Son of our holy Mother order his disciples to rob (humanly speaking) a countryman of his asfs? The motive often sanctifies the deed.”

“ But

“ But remember, holy father, that you are neither Jacob, nor yet a son of Israel, much less our blessed Saviour. What was proper and holy in those persons and those times of old, may be sinful now, as I have no doubt might be easily proved by a few minors and majors.”

“ And remember, thou heretically-inclined disputer, that the servants of the Most High are not to be insulted with impunity. In this respect, both old and new times agree. Remember, also, that the freedoms which your master thinks proper to indulge, may, when directed against the church, be treated as a crime of the deepest dye.”

Tomaso stood preparing a reply, but the monk ordered him to hold his peace, and strutted off with a true churchman’s dignity. He would not have conversed so long, had he not expected that his explanation of Tomaso’s natural inference would be repeated to others, and prevent similar remarks.

“ I am glad,” said Tomaso to himself, “ that Father Close-cowl is not my confessor. By the Virgin ! I should be afraid, when

when I offended him, that he would order me, for a penance, to leave off logic, and experiments, and philosophy, and all the rest of the sciences."

He now ran off for the good-natured purpose of preparing the children for the loss of their beloved tulips. He found Laura delaying her usual morning visit to the garden, until she could enjoy the company of her favourite play-fellow.

"Oh the spiteful wretch!" cried she, as Tomaso finished his oration. "I hate him worse than ever. He is a hypocrite all over. If his malice had but spared Henri's flower, I should not be so sorry."

After seeing her tolerably composed, the kind servant thought it would not be amiss if Henri had a little of his logic before he came to the castle. He had not gone far ere he met Henri speeding along. At the relation of Carlo's nocturnal adventure, his eyes flashed fire; he vowed vengeance, nor did Niccolo himself, tho' Tomaso repeated all the good father's arguments, escape his reproach.

"How will poor Laura regret her flower!" said he.

"Her

“ Her only concern is for you.”

“ For me! The dear girl! Oh if that were all, I care not for my own.”

“ Well!” thought our philosopher, “ it is really surprising that these children should have the very same sentiments on a thing that never happened before. I could almost believe, if I had not proved the contrary, by the strict rules of logic, that one soul serves them both. By the sciences! I fear I have made some mistake in the *predicables*.”

Henri's starting past him, interrupted his profound cogitations.

“ Thoughtless boy!” cried he, catching him by the arm, “ don't be so regardless of consequences, as to go just now to the castle! You will be quarrelling with Carlo, and then you will be forbid seeing Laura any more. Go home, and consult your father. He is a rare reasoner, faith.”

By promising that Laura should visit him, Tomaso effected his purpose; and Henri, his cheerfulness entirely fled, slowly retraced his way home.

Vignolo's grief at finding his old friend yield to such infatuation, was considerably alleviated

alleviated by the spirit which he had displayed, while believing Carlo guilty.

“ Yes,” said he to his lady, “ the time will surely come when the boy’s malevolence will lead to acts which no art can conceal. The fair mask of Virtue will then be torn from the hideous features of Vice. For this moment I will anxiously watch, but forbear, at present, to interfere, lest it be afterwards suspected that my interposition arises more from a desire to promote dissension than justice.”

Thus terminated an event which threatened a total destruction of the plans of Guilt. Innocence was however the only sufferer, Laura, to make up for former negligence, being obliged to commit to memory several long pieces of devotion appointed by Niccolo. Henri pitied her from his soul. He would willingly have mitigated her punishment by sharing it, but alas! he found that Tomaso’s assertion of their having only one mind between them, was not dictated by sound logic.

At this time the Neapolitans were alarmed by a rumour that the French were making great preparations for the invasion of Italy.

Italy. In the interest which this report excited, the affair of the tulips was forgotten; and Vignolo was prevented from questioning Father Niccolo concerning the right he had assumed to order the destruction of Henri's flower, since he was not, in the smallest degree, accountable to him for any error of principle or conduct.

The dreaded invasion being often the subject of conversation, renewed, with additional strength, the count's exclamations against human nature.

“ Will you yet contend,” would he sometimes say to Vignolo, “ for man's superiority to the brute creation in virtue and happiness? Do they, like man, league together for the destruction of their own species? Man, without considering that he stands in the same predicament, rashly brands the beasts of the forest with the epithet of cruel, because, for sustenance, they tear an inoffensive animal to pieces! Ah! if we judge of the savage nature of animals by the number of their victims, to what monster can man be compared?”

“ Consider, my friend, that man can excel all other creatures in clemency as well

well as in cruelty. War appears a necessary evil. If the vicious combine to destroy, the virtuous must combine to preserve."

" Alas ! Vignolo, what an inconsistent, yet lamentable, confession ! How strikingly it displays the superior wretchedness of human nature ! Since for men, reasonable beings, to cut each others throats, is a necessary evil, nay, the very tenure of their existence. The personal quarrels of princes oft involve an innocent people in the ravages of fire and sword. Oh man, man, go learn civilization from wolves, and humanity from the blood-thirsty tyger ! " &c.

As no offensive blow was for some time struck, Novini and his friends, trusting the storm would blow over, recovered their usual tranquillity.

## CHAP. XXIII.

*False wisdom all, and vain philosophy!*

MILTON.

THE artful monk, inspired by a secret motive, endeavoured by various manœuvres to check the rising loves of Laura and Henri. All was, however, ineffectual. Brought up together from infancy, associating in the joys, the sorrows, and the studies of youth, they soon loved each other with fraternal warmth. Their affection was pure and tender as that of angels. But ere Laura attained her fifteenth year, their love assumed another form. It became more ardent, more tender, more irresistibly touching, but the pleasing familiarity of children had yielded to timidity, and manners somewhat constrained and artificial. This, at first, afflicted Henri, and he would often wish for a return of her late careless demeanour and unreserved marks of affection. But he soon learned that this change was a sure indication

tion of his own influence over her heart. He loved with romantic fondness, but her attractions, though so powerful, that even Carlo began to observe her with unusual attention, were not the sole basis of his attachment ; they only heightened that sweet sensation, which her amiable simplicity and goodness of heart had first inspired. To Laura, Carlo's attention was much more distressing than his former neglect. He was not slow in observing this, and believing that it arose from her predilection for Henri, his hatred of that worthy youth was still farther increased. But his malice he dared not indulge. Niccolo's disclosure of the nature of his connexion with Novini, having taught him that the count's favour was necessary to that aggrandizement for which his heart already panted, he feared again to risk losing the protection which had lately cost him so much pains to secure. The infatuated count beheld, without alarm, Carlo's regard for Laura, believing it sprung solely from fraternal affection ; and when suspicions of the truth arose, he thought it would not be improper to give him a still better claim to the title

title of son. This, however, he repos'd in his own bosom.

With a mingled sensa<sup>n</sup>tion of pleasure and regret, the worthy Vignolo witnessed Henri's rising attachment for the daughter of his friend. He acknowledged her inestimable worth, and would with pleasure have completed their happiness. But several reasons prevented him from propos- ing it to Novini. As Marco had appoint- ed him sole guardian of Laura, it might appear that, to ensure her fortune to his family, he had artfully promoted the chil- dren's attachment, and fomented her ha- tred of Carlo. A suspicion from which he revolted, but which he knew Niccolo would suggest, and perhaps annihilate their ancient friendship. Befides, Henri had declined in the count's favour, and the youth of both parties formed a very plau- sible objection.

About this period the eyes of all Europe were turned with admiring expectation at the discoveries of the Spaniards. The romantic accounts of the beauty and riches of the new world spread with unusual ra- pidity, and induced many from the neigh-  
bouring

bouring states to offer their services to Spain. The obscurity which at that time overshadowed such recent, vast, and distant expeditions, gave full play to the imagination, and no bounds were set to the needy adventurers' expectations. Among various absurdities propagated relative to such remote navigations, the following may not be unworthy of notice, as it gave rise to much speculation among Novini's friends. The great Columbus, from the sea's being visibly elevated near the pleasant island of Trinidad, imagined that he had discovered the garden of Eden ; which some really imagined to be the fact, because that fabulous writer Sir John Mandeville, (to whom unbounded credit was, in that age, given) had declared that Paradise was the highest land in the habitable globe\*.

Such romance awakened Novini's taste for a life of variety and adventure. Every intelligence from the new hemisphere was received with unusual eagerness. When a new discovery was announced, he would sometimes

\* Robertson's History of America, Vol. 1. p. 441.

sometimes strike his breast and exclaim  
with a sigh,

“ Good Heavens ! What a wretch am I !  
To live when a new world, where scenes,  
never as yet beheld or imagined by man,  
may salute you at every step, where good  
may predominate, dawns upon us poor  
mortals, and yet be incapable of enjoying  
the blessing !”

But none were so enraptured with the  
idea of the discovery of Paradise, as our  
honest philosopher.

“ Oh master !” said he, one morning  
as he placed his easy chair by the fire side,  
“ Oh master ! what a fine age we live in !  
What a noble thing it will be for the seven  
sciences, if Paradise be really found out  
at last ! I would not, for ten times as much  
as the good Marco left me, have died be-  
fore this discovery. I have a good mind,  
Signore, to embark in the first ship, going  
to the western world, and try to reach the  
tree of knowledge. By the Virgin ! if once  
I eat my belly full of the fruit, I shall be  
able to read all the learned lingos in the  
world, whether Latin, Greek, or Hebrew.  
As for mathematics, and astronomy, and  
logic,

logic, I warrant I shall master them at a breakfast or two!"

"So, Tomaso, you would leave your wife and children, to undertake such a long voyage, before the authenticity of the account be confirmed?"

"Why truly, Signore, I should be sorry to leave my dear Bianca, and the little philosophers. Besides, I begin to think I should look more like a fool than a philosopher, if, when I came to the garden of Eden, the angel with a flaming sword should still be standing at the gate."

"Very probably that will be the case. You had, therefore, better stay, till you shall have satisfaction in that material point."

"Ah! Signore, but there are two reasons which make me fear a delay will prevent my becoming a second Aristotle. Primo, all the fruit may be devoured before I get there. Secundo, the schoolmasters and learned men will probably conspire to pull up the tree, for fear it should spoil their trade."

"Oh!" said Novini, smiling, "if you lose the first crop since the discovery, you may,

may, at least, share the second or third. As for the conspiracy of learned men, that need not alarm you. Every man will unite to frustrate so obvious an effect of their malice. But I doubt, Tomaso, of the truth of this report."

" Why, Signore, a great many true logical arguments might be given on both sides of the question. It is not now more surprising that Paradise should be discovered, than it was, fifty years ago, that we should find out a new world, never discovered since Bible-times. Mercy! what strange things come to pass. I once thought I should never be what I am."

" Alas! nor I. Ah Heavens! How can you, at such a time, rouse memory to her painful task?"

" Oh my dear master! I am very sorry for it. But when I am arguing logically, I can think of nothing else. However, if this account be true, I'll soon make you amends for my careless blabbing. I'll bring you a nice slip from the tree of life, which will make you a thousand times better than ever you were in your best days, and drive away all your physicians. By the Virgin! what will become of those gentry?"

“ Why, Tomaso, they may turn gardeners, like Alexis.”

“ A true logical thought, by the sciences ! Only, instead of cultivating useless flowers, I should set them to raise new plants from the life-giving tree.”

“ The experiment would reflect no credit either on your discernment or philosophy,” said Novini.

“ Prove it, Signore !”

“ I will,” said the count, who was ever ready to ridicule a set of men, whose prescriptions had so often tormented him.

“ The nostrum-mongers have been, from time immemorial, accustomed to destroy what they were required to preserve : ill, and long-continued, habits, are not to be easily eradicated : ergo, before they forgot their old practices, the tree of life would die.”

“ Ha ! well said, indeed ! A true logical conclusum. Neither Aristotle, nor Plato, could have answered better. It reminds me of one of Father Paul’s curious experiments.”

A noise, resembling the falling of heavy furniture, which was followed by a cry of

Help !

Help! Murder! Help! was now distinguished.

"That is sure my aunt's voice," said Novini, in a tone of alarm. "What new event is Fortune preparing to distress my soul!"

"Oh Signore," replied Tomaso, turning pale. "I fear it is owing to my philosophy. The experiment is broke, that is, the rope."

Saying he would soon return, he hurried off to Beatrice's study. A curious scene there presented itself. The fair composer lay on the floor in a half-recumbent posture. In her right hand she held a pen, in her left a large inkstand. She was almost covered with books, which had fallen from a kind of book-case of Tomaso's contrivance. She dared not attempt to rise, lest the motion should precipitate the ponderous and tottering folios to complete her destruction.

"It is just what I expected," said Tomaso. Observing no danger, he very composedly liberated her from her truly awkward situation. He could not restrain a smile at her present strange appearance.

In putting up her hands to save her head from being crushed by the loads of learning, the contents of the inkstand had run in copious streams down her face and neck, and completely spoiled her white *robe de chambre*.

“Thou caitiff vile!” cried she. “What has induced thee to plot my destruction? What wouldst thou have said, had death been my portion from thy vile contrivances?”

“I cannot, Signora, speak specifically, as my old master used to say, to that point. Because it would only be a waste of argument. But I think if you had been really killed, you might have found my logic and invention could clear me from all blame.”

“How? Troglodyte! to what other monster can my misfortunes be attributed?”

“To yourself, Signora, or, rather, to my sincere desire of serving you, and the muses, and the golden book, and philosophy, which, in fact, are one and the same thing.”

Conscious there was some truth in the remark, she grew more composed, and Tomaso, always happy to hear himself talk, continued his defence.

“You

" You know, Signora, you once wished for the art of Merlin, and when I asked the reason, for what is life without logic? You said if you had that power, you could, with a single word, bring any book you might want from the library, and send it back in the same manner; whereas now, ere you found the author you wished to consult, the train of ideas was often lost. Now, said I to myself, though it is impossible for me to give you the power to enchant, either by magic or beauty, as I have lately proved, yet I may find a medium. So I puzzled my brains to place the books in such a manner as to enable you to reach them without rising, which I thought would be easy for your head-piece."

" Easy for my head-piece!" interrupted Beatrice, with anger. " Your contrivance has deranged it for ever."

" Ah, Signora, be thankful it is no worse. Consider what might have been the consequence, had I trusted such a weight to only one rope!"

" Oh!" thought Beatrice, " when thou suspendest thyself from a beam, mayst thou be as careful!"

I ?

" Besides,

“ Besides, Signora, you overlook the advantages you have derived from this unexpected event.”

“ Advantages !”

“ Yes, Signora, and of no common sort. Is not learning the method of changing your silver locks into an ebon hue, an immense advantage ?

At this observation, she turned to the looking-glass, and beheld the havock made by the fable stream in her hair and countenance. Her rage was now become ten-fold increased. Tomaso, remembering his former adventure, thought it time to be moving, but ere he made his exit, a book, sent with no feeble hand, struck him on shoulder.

“ By the sciences !” cried he, “ it is well for my poor bones that you have not the power of Merlin.”

A piece of paper fell from the volume. He took it up unperceived, and was hastening to his master, when Beatrice ordered him to return.

“ Observe, thou paragon of absurdity ! if thou wishest thy folly to be pardoned, not to reveal this disaster which has overwhelmed me with shame and agony.”

“ Shame

“Shame and agony!” repeated Tomaso. “I think, Signora, I can easily demonstrate you have felt neither one nor the other. Primo——”

“Begone! Renew not the torments of my soul with your asinine *primos*!”

Our strict logician was, however, unwilling to lose his argument. He went out, closed the door, and, placing his mouth to the key-hole, said,

“Primo, you cannot have felt much pain, because your anger has so soon conquered it. Secundo——”

“Thou tormenting wretch! Am I to become a martyr to thy absurdities?” exclaimed the enraged composer, as she endeavoured to open the door.

“Oh! Signora, I am just at the *conclusum*. Secundo, you have no reason to be ashamed, because nobody saw your black face but myself, your faithful secret-keeper, as the experiment of the silver lock has clearly demonstrated.”

He now ran down stairs with great agility, not daring to remain to witness the effects of his logic.

“Tomaso,”

“ Tomaso,” said the count, anxiously, “ I fear you bring distressing information.”

“ Oh no, master, it is the *very reverse* of distressing. It was only the Signora’s library falling.”

“ How? Her whole library fall down at once?”

“ Yes, Signore. You know she complained of the inconvenience of rising to reach the books. So, with her consent, I, and a joiner from the city, placed three rows of shelves at each side of a large square, and then hung the whole, by two strong ropes from the cieling, just at the right hand of her studying-table. It was the most philosophical thing I ever saw. With a slight touch of her finger she could turn all her books about, and reach whichever she had a mind to. One fault indeed it had, as I *now* find, but perfection cannot be got you know in this changeful scene. It would often turn when she did not want it, which I am afraid has untwisted the ropes.”

“ You should have had chains,” said Novini, laughing heartily at the contrivance

ance and the unfortunate result. His mirth did not abate, when Tomaso produced the paper which had dropped from the book. It was an unfinished poetical rhapsody, entitled,

## INVOCATION TO LOVE.

“ Resistless power ! ere spring be fled,  
Ere all my charms depart,  
Oh haste, thy influence sweet to shed  
O'er a lone Virgin's heart.

I pray'd : He came ; my glowing veins  
Proclaim the transport of my pains.

“ Sweet youth ! nice form'd in Beauty's mold,  
Who bids my breast to figh,  
Approach, approach with ardour bold,  
And force Despair to fly.  
But if Indiff'rence, much-lov'd boy !  
Has chang'd thy heart to icc,  
Ah, shun the flames which me destroy,  
Lest it melt in a trice.”

The four last words were added by the count, who thought them necessary to complete the rhyme and the conceit. Laura, Henri, and Carlo now entered, who were favoured with a repetition of the poetry.

“ Oh,” said Laura, smiling, “ the piece is too sublime for our weak capacities.”

“ By far, indeed,” replied Henri, glancing over it.

" Yet," rejoined Carlo, " some might not find it easy to excel it on such a subject."

" The overflowings of a pure, yet ardent, passion would leave such bombast far behind," added Henri.

" You are then admirably qualified for the task," said Carlo, reaching pen and ink, and sarcastically desiring Henri to correct what was wrong, and supply, by his " pure overflowings," what was deficient.

Laura blushed. The count looked round for an explanation. Henri overlooked the malignant intention of Carlo, and, wishing to direct the attention of the company to some other topic, said, " Well, I shall give you a specimen of my muse, and instantly wrote the following impromptu on the back of the fragment :

Lest the reader should fail from her verses to find  
What subject her Genius did try,  
With considerate pity the Poetess kind  
Has placed the title on high.

All present, save Carlo, laughed at this folly; but Henri had soon reason to repent the indulgence of his satyrical vein, as

Beatrice,

Beatrice, having missed her precious fragment, came to question Tomaso on the subject. She was surprised, and somewhat daunted by their mirth.

“Hast thou at last exposed me to derision?” said she, furiously, to the ingenuous mechanic.

“No, Signora, not I, as I hope to enter Paradise. Bianca will think I stay long, so, Signora, I must away,

“Left the flames which you destroy,  
Should melt me in a trice.”

The company smiled at his application.

“Oh, nephew!” cried Beatrice, with a tragic air, “Art thou indeed fallen so low? Are thy noble sentiments so wholly extinct, that thou canst suffer a low-born wretch to insult, with impunity, a member of the once-illustrious house of Novini?”

“I assure you, aunt, the poor fellow means no harm.”

“No harm! Has not the Goth dared to rob me of——”

“These verses I presume you mean,” interrupted Carlo, eager to lower Henri in her esteem. His intention was fully answered.

answered. Beatrice was wounded in the most tender point; and, although Henri, with unfeigned regret, attempted to sooth her by the most submissive apology, although even Laura interceded in his behalf, yet she vowed never to pardon the contempt which his epigram implied for her poetical abilities. Tomaso's venial fault was intirely forgotten in this more heinous offence. In great perturbation she retired to her study. It now required all Laura's influence, and even the authority of his father, to prevent Henri from calling Carlo to a severe account for his officious interference.

---

## CHAP. XXIV.

*“When night  
Wraps her dark curtain round this busy world,  
Come thou to——”*

THE absurd supposition of the discovery of the Garden of Eden was quickly dispelled, but the flattering account of the riches

riches of the new world daily received confirmation, and awakened a spirit of enterprise even in the Confederate Carthusians. Lorenzo, whose temper was far more congenial to the camp than the convent, burst at once through the sluggish repose of so many years, and he declared to his associate that he intended to embark in the next fleet bound to the new world, should Spain accept of his services.

“Here,” said he, “we can acquire no glory. In my present pursuit, wealth and renown are in an extraordinary degree united.”

“So you will leave your *dearly-beloved* nephew a prey to his enemies?”

“No. He shall leave all his enemies behind him.”

“Shall! Will you dare to take him without the count’s consent?”

“If Carlo be willing, I care for nothing else. I am his natural protector. Of that, your advice has hitherto prevented me from informing him, but in the New World your objections to a full disclosure will be of no force.”

“But

“ But consider our design against Novini ?”

“ From my soul I repent not having sooner relinquished it.”

“ Are you so weak ? Do you fear the pangs of purgatory ?”

“ I speak not from a principle of holiness, but from reflecting on the years I have spent so unprofitably.”

“ Yet, to my knowledge, not without pleasure. Unprofitably indeed you may have employed your time, if, after preparing the ground, and sowing the grain, you pettishly relinquish the golden harvest when it is ripe for the sickle. Is the depriving the only son of your dearly-beloved sister of such immense possessions, such an illustrious title, any proof of your boasted affection ? Have you well considered the dangers incident to such a vast navigation on unknown seas, and the perils of savage warfare, in unexplored regions ? Should you even surmount all, and acquire the wealth of Crœsus, still the luxury of enjoyment can be found only in civilized countries.”

“ All

“ All this is very just ; all this I have foreseen ; but my resolution is unalterable.”

“ Well, be it so. I trust, however, you will defer its execution for a few months, in which time I expect to bring matters to a crisis.”

To this compromise, Lorenzo, at length, consented, and Niccolo broke up the conference much better pleased than if the scheme had been altogether relinquished. For, although he was extremely desirous of removing one who, at any time, had the power to ruin him, yet he knew that his co-operation would be necessary to the happy development of his own favourite design. Besides, as this power was reciprocal, he possessed a peculiar pledge for Lorenzo’s fidelity.

“ And where,” thought he, “ shall I find another so interested in my success ? No, Lorenzo must continue my cat’s-paw till I can do without him. Then, he may go to the Devil.”

So easily could he for ever part with the associate of so many years ! Of such tenuity are the bands of guilt ! Niccolo himself once

once thought of following Lorenzo's example, and, at first view, it may seem, that to fly from a country, where he dared hardly shew his face, would have been the most prudent step he could have taken. But, independent of the reasons he had so forcibly urged to his companion, a powerful motive, not yet explained, dissuaded him.

While Niccolo was exercising his genius to strike a decisive stroke, Lorenzo, with great diligence, applied himself to acquire the Spanish language. Their proceedings were, however, retarded by the unsettled state of the country. The storm, which had, for some time, impended over Italy, burst with unexpected violence. The French, under the command of their sovereign Charles the eighth, rapidly advanced towards Naples. The spirit of the Neapolitans seemed wholly extinct. Little or no resistance was made to the invaders, superstition, perhaps, suggesting that it would be criminal to oppose a monarch, who had been invested with their kingdom by the Pope. Their weak and pusillanimous monarch, Alphonso the second, while

while the enemy was at a considerable distance, abdicated the throne, and sought refuge in Sicily. Such a cowardly example was contagious.

Unfortunately, Novini, at this distressing period was so violently attacked by illness, that he could not be removed without the greatest hazard of his life. In this exigency, Signora Vignolo, then far advanced in pregnancy, was so urgent for her husband to follow the example of his sovereign, that he was compelled to sacrifice friendship to the preservation of his family. Hard as appeared the task of separating Laura from her apparently dying parent, Vignolo, as her guardian, deemed it his incumbent duty to endeavour to preserve her from the hands of the enemy. He wished her to accompany him, but this offer, though so flattering to her love of Henri, she had the fortitude to resist. Beatrice supported her pious resolution, with her highest flow of eloquence. With all her peculiarities she was not without affection, and she resolved to follow the fate of her nephew and her manuscripts. She also imagined the dangers of the sea might prove, at her time of life, as fatal as

the arms of the invaders. Carlo's affection was not put to the test, he having, about six weeks before, obtained Novini's leave to accompany a young nobleman to Palermo, from which he was not yet returned.

The philosophical domestic was greatly puzzled what part to perform. Prudence urged him to fly, and gratitude to remain with his master. He weighed their arguments, pro and con, with true logical precision; but his honest heart being umpire, gratitude prevailed.

“ If I stay, I may lose my all. But, query, if I go, shall I be sure of saving it? Besides, every thing I possess, even Bianca herself, I owe to this good family. Ergo, I should venture all for their service. The good Marco left me the legacy only because of my attachment to his grand-daughter, and because he believed I would serve her as long as I lived: so it stands with reason that, if I leave her, the bargain will be void. By the Virgin! I should almost expect him to rise from the grave and take it back again.”

His decision was not however quite agreeable to Bianca. She attempted to change

change it, but, not being acquainted with syllogisms, failed of success.

A valuable present from Beatrice, and promises of future advantages, tended to weaken her opposition. She also trusted that this storm, like that occasioned by the revolted barons a few years before, would pass over without any serious disaster, and that her family would derive great advantage from her husband's fidelity.

The laudable resolutions of persons so interested in Laura's welfare, and the hated Carlo's absence, diminished Vignolo's anxiety on account of his unavoidable separation from his unhappy friend. He likewise obtained Laura's solemn promise that, in case of imminent danger, or her father's decease, she would take refuge in a convent, which he recommended, until himself, or son, arrived for her protection. That worthy youth earnestly entreated permission to remain at Naples for the preservation of his dear Laura, and to share the pious office of attending her sick parent; but his mother's fears of losing her only surviving son, were so great, that she could

could not bear him out of her presence. On her knees, she prayed he would not, in this extremity, forsake her; vowing that his refusal would send her to the grave. To resist a suit, thus urged, was impossible. Even Laura herself exerted all her influence in support of filial obedience. Accordingly Vignolo, with his family, after taking an affectionate and, as he believed, a final farewell, of his old companion, went on board a felucca bound for Sicily, where several of his wife's relations resided.

During the intervals of relaxation from attending her unhappy nephew, Beatrice, who had now finished two copies of her "Golden Book," pryed into every corner in search of a secure hiding-place. But finding none suitable, and reflecting, that if the castle should be destroyed, the manuscript would share its fate, she determined to consult Tomaso, whose secrecy, relative to the beautifying experiment, she believed was still inviolate. Calling him aside, she inquired where she should deposit one of the copies, intending to take care of the other herself.

"The

"The convent will be a nice place," said Tomaso, "as Christian soldiers will not destroy our holy places like the Infidels."

"Accidental conflagrations may however occur. But my greatest apprehension is, that the monks will transcribe the adventures of Celia, and rob me of the just applause of posterity."

"Well observed indeed, Signora. But what think you of the ruins where I followed Father Niccolo? I could easily prove the enemy will never think of burning them."

"Ha! Thy words are oracular. That shall be the honoured sanctuary. When midnight rules, come to my apartment."

Receiving Tomaso's promise of secrecy, she retired, much better satisfied, and less apprehensive of the enemy. The honest domestic was exact to his appointment. The great clock of the castle was sounding twelve, as he entered the "Seat of Heavenly Musing." He found Beatrice had just finished her task of packing books and papers in the Vulcanian repository.

"Take

“Take that,” said she, pointing to the chest, “and bury it in the most impervious part of the recess. Choose a spot as gloomy as the Styx. Your diligence and fidelity shall not be unrewarded.”

Tomaso essayed to lift it, but found his utmost efforts unavailing.

“This is indeed a dilemma, Signora,” said he, seating himself on the chest with great composure.

“Dilemma indeed! How shall we be extricated from this difficulty?”

“Why, Signora, there are no less than three ways to cut off the horns of the dilemma. Primo, I may carry the chest, and then return for its contents.”

“A most excellent invention indeed.”

“But, like all other inventions, it is not without objection. It stands with reason that, the oftener we go, we shall be the more likely to be discovered. The least noise, at this dead hour, will alarm the family. My poor master is easily wakened.”

“All this escaped my cogitations.”

“So I thought. But hear my secundo. If another assist me, all may be carried at once.”

“Oh!

“ Oh ! Your first proposition infinitely excels the second. Where canst thou find one as trusty, as honest as thyself ?”

“ As to that, Signora, generally speaking, perhaps no where. Yet I know one who would almost die before she would reveal the secret.”

“ She ! Confide the mystery to a woman ? Speak ! Ease my tortured soul ! Who is this phoenix of the fair ?”

“ Yourself, Signora,” said Tomaso pointedly.

“ Myself !” said Beatrice, starting back, “ Must I trust myself alone at the silent midnight hour with thy perfidious sex ? When thou hast beguiled me so far from home and human intercourse, God knows what horrid designs may possess thine heart !”

“ Do you think, Signora, I would commit murder ?”

“ No, Tomaso, something more dreadful is present to my sensitive imagination.”

“ Something more dreadful, Signora. Surely you cannot imagine I will run off with the “ Golden Book ” and the iron chest ?”

“ Thy

"Thy dulness is indeed wonderful. Hadst thou studied the Virgin heroines of antiquity, thou wouldest have known that, even above life, they prized their honour."

"Oh, Signora," said Tomaso smiling, "Do you take me for a cruel invader? I will not so much as touch you by the way, I swear it by the Sciences."

"By the Sciences! Ere I confide in thee, thou must swear by this Holy Cross."

Tomaso, eager to rejoin his family, pressed it to his lips, and took the required oath. This difficulty being overcome, she grasped one of the handles, and, preceded by her confidant, went down stairs with great caution, though not without reluctance on account of so porter-like an employment. No difficulty occurred in their retreat, as every thing had been previously arranged by Tomaso. They were often compelled to set down their burden by the way. Every rustling alarmed the sensitive Beatrice, who often mistook a tree for a plundering invader. Neither of them dared to break the awful silence. When they approached the ruins, they were almost exhausted, and the fear of the banditti,

banditti, which Lorenzo was supposed to have encountered in that retired spot, nearly overcame the trembling Virgin, and made Tomaso wish he was safe at home again. The place being chosen, Tomaso began to dig, while Beatrice stood near with a lantern, which, for fear of attracting a midnight ravisher, she, as far as was consistent with lighting her companion, concealed.

“ Ah,” said Tomaso, as he put in the chest, “ I never thought I should be a grave digger. This world, as my poor master says, is full of ups and downs.”

“ There is one pleasing circumstance,” replied Beatrice, “ which ought to reconcile you to the task. You are now burying what can never die.”

“ I can give a philosophical reason for that. It is already dead.”

“ You, as usual, misunderstand me. I mean that, by interring it in the bowels of the earth, you may be the means of making it live for ever. For its spirit —”

“ Cannot get out of the chest,” added Tomaso, firmly stamping on the mold. She made no reply, but extinguished the

light, and left the ruins. It was now dreadfully dark. Rain began to pour down in torrents, and wetted them to the skin. Desirous of escaping the storm, she quickened her pace; but, unfortunately, as she was hastily descending a clayey bank, she slipped and rolled into a miry pool at the bottom. She called on the philosopher for assistance. He approached with caution.

“ Alas! Signora,” said he piteously, “ I am very willing to assist you, and shall instantly remove this dilemma, if you will tell me how I can do so without touching you, which my oath prevents me from doing. If you choose, I will run home for Peter.”

“ Oh thou wretch! Wouldst thou then betray me?”

“ Why what can I do, Signora? I cannot be absolved from my oath till morning, and to stay till day-light may not be very agreeable. Indeed if I had a rope.”

“ Would to Heaven thou hadst!” cried she. Passion now gave her fresh strength, and after a few plunges she extricated herself. Darkness spared her shame, and concealed

cealed her disastrous plight from observation. Happily, the spoiling of her clothes was the greatest inconvenience which ensued. She reached the castle without any farther accident, when she dismissed her attendant, and stole in silence to her bed-chamber.

The morning appointed for the sailing of the felucca, engaged by Vignolo, arrived, and found Henri still unprepared for the voyage. He had hoped a favourable turn of affairs would prevent a separation from all his soul held dear, but the defeat of Ferdinand's army, and the near approach of the French, annihilating all such flattering expectations, he hastily left the vessel once more to bid adieu to his Laura, and renew at her feet his vows of eternal constancy.

Laura, distressed by her father's melancholy situation, and alarmed for the safety of her lover, arose that morning earlier than usual; and, in hopes of calming her ruffled spirits ere she visited her parent, went into the garden. The morning was beautiful, and well adapted to restore tranquillity. The ruddy beams gilded the

round tops of her favourite orange trees, and shed a soft seducing lustre o'er the parterre, enriched with shrubs planted by the hand of Henri. But the ocean glowing with the deep radiance of morn, the galliots moving in the bay, engrossed all her attention, for there her imagination pictured the dear object of her love. A vessel shot out of the harbour.

"Ah," thought she, "now may the dear generous youth be leaving me for ever!"

She was anxiously watching the vessel lessening in the distant perspective, when the object of her fond solicitude, hitherto concealed by the garden-wall, rushed into her presence.

"Oh, Henri!" cried she, "is it you?" and, overcome by her emotions, would have fallen to the ground had not the enraptured Henri instantly supported her. When their first transports had subsided, he again attempted to persuade her to accompany his parents to Sicily; but she still remained firm in her resolution not to leave her father while her attention could alleviate his sufferings. The warmth of her filial

filial piety imparted new lustre to her beauty, and increased his fears of losing such a treasure. While mutually indulging these tender moments of regret, the distant reports of fire-arms were heard.

"Oh, why did you come?" cried Laura, imagining the enemy were at hand. "For your parents' sake, for my sake, let us instantly part."

"Alas!" said Henri, affectionately embracing her, while the tears started into his eyes, "Alas, we must part. Farewell, most amiable, most beloved of women! May Heaven promote our happy re-union!"

"The blessed Virgin preserve you!" repeated Laura, and hurried from the spot, lest a longer stay should prove fatal to her lover.

Henri gazed till she was out of sight. Then, with a heart somewhat relieved by her assurances of fidelity, and filled with admiration of her filial tenderness, he returned to the felucca, which he found on the point of failing.

## CHAP. XXV.

*If falsehood and guile be so specious and attractive, why comes it to pass, that devils do not force their way through Heaven's blessed portals?*

SCHILLER.

THE forces of Charles the eighth, joined by several of the revolted barons, rapidly advanced. Divided among themselves, the Neapolitans lost all courage, and the enemy, almost without resistance, made their triumphal entry into the metropolis. The Confederate Carthusians, protected by the prejudices of the times, in their holy retreat, behold, with little emotion, the disasters flowing on their country. With far greater interest they watched the progress of Novini's disorder, on the issue of which so much depended. Niccolo would sometimes find his associate in villainy on the policy of accelerating the time of Carlo's succession to the wealth and honours of his patron. To such observations, Lorenzo replied, that, as it was unlikely the count would recover, it would be much better to leave

leave his fate in the hands of Nature, than to incur the guilt and danger of such a measure.

“ Besides,” added he, “ Carlo is absent. Ere he rejoin us he will be exposed to the dangers of the sea, and a daring piratical enemy. Nay, it is so long since we have had any certain accounts of him, that even now he may be no more. Then what will become of us and his heirship?”

The latter argument prolonged the life of the hapless Novini.

Meantime, the count’s family suffered little inconvenience from the vicinity of the invading army. Providentially, one of the barons, who had joined the French monarch, had, in his youth, been considerably indebted to the count’s generosity; and in this extremity gratefully returned the obligation, by protecting him from the soldiers’ licentiousness. The general conduct of the conquerors was, indeed, more conformable to the present polished state of society, than to that comparatively barbarous period; their paucity of number, and the powerful combination forming against them

them, rendering it highly impolitic to provoke the slumbering spirit of the Italians.

By the desire of Beatrice, Tomaso and his family were admitted inmates of the castle. Two powerful inducements led to this request. One was, that her nephew might be entertained whenever it should be agreeable, with his old favourite's conversation, and the other, that Tomaso might be less exposed to the threats and temptations of the soldiery, to discover whether he had assisted in *burying any valuables* on their approach. The precious contents of the iron chest were seldom absent from her thoughts.

About this period Alexis, the old Greek florist, who some time before had embraced the principles of the Romish church, fell dangerously ill. His spiritual director having fled to Sicily with one of his noble patrons, Niccolo, though no great favourite, attended him to administer spiritual consolation. A few days before his death, the nurse was desired, while the sanctified hypocrite was present, to reach his medicine. The old woman went hastily to a small

small cupboard, took out a phial, and began to pour a brownish liquid into a cup.

"Hold!" said Alexis eagerly, "would you destroy me?"

"All the saints in Heaven forbid!" said the nurse.

Surprised at his manner, Niccolo inquired whether he thought the liquid was poisonous?

"It is poisonous, holy father, and yet it is not poisonous."

"How, my son; poisonous, and yet not poisonous? explain yourself?"

"That phial, reverend Father, was given to me several years ago by an old Turk, in return for some trifling service. In all my wanderings it has been my constant companion; I supposed it was a powerful amulet. One spoonful of the liquid, he said, taken inwardly, would produce a deep sleep, which would continue, at least, for twenty four hours. A greater quantity might produce eternal sleep."

This recital greatly interested Niccolo. He instantly fore saw what advantages might flow from possessing such a secret. He now observed that dangerous accidents might

might arise if such a pernicious fluid were left in the way of the ignorant or unwary. The old nurse was for throwing it out of the window ; but the holy Father said he himself would take care of it, and putting it under his robe, immediately departed.

The next day Alexis became insensible, and soon after expired. Tomaso was greatly affected by his death, and Beatrice composed an epitaph to his memory.

Laura, meanwhile, remained closely secluded within the castle, attending her father with unremitting tenderness. The least sign of amendment, the satisfaction he sometimes expressed at her filial affection, more than rewarded her self-denial, and softened the pain of being separated from Henri. With returning health, the glow of paternal love, which had been almost extinguished by Niccolo's insinuations and Carlo's hypocritical manners, seemed also to revive. The comparison he now could not avoid making between Laura and Carlo, contributed to strengthen this disposition.

" If Carlo," would he say to the wily Carthusian, " really felt those sentiments

of gratitude and affection which we have supposed him to possess, and which my conduct has been calculated to inspire, would he not have braved some danger, have suffered some inconvenience, have relinquished some pleasure to assist me in this extremity? Alas! I fear that his heart is naturally corrupt, or his rising virtue blasted by the contagion of human intercourse, or, immediately on the irruption of the enemy, he would have flown to my relief."

With unaffected concern, Niccolo witnessed these principles of returning rectitude. He endeavoured to obviate the disadvantageous impressions the count was now disposed to receive of his favourite. He remarked, that he ought not to form an opinion too hastily, since Carlo's absence, at this important crisis, might have arisen from sickness, captivity, or other accidents.

" Or even allowing, for a moment, that he is in health and at liberty, that he is informed of your danger, that pleasure ensnares him from his duty; what, my son, is the natural inference of a reasonable

ble being? Why, that it is a proof of his disinterested spirit, a proof that he belongs not to that hypocritical selfish class, who fawn round a sick-bed, endeavouring, with well-affected tenderness to gain an interest in the heart of the unhappy sufferer, in order to secure a still greater interest in his fortune."

Novini, here expressing some uneasiness, the monk added,

"I allude not to you, my son. Let me, however, entreat you not to condemn Carlo, without hearing his defence. This, at least, justice and religion demand."

By such like arguments he softened the displeasure of the count, at being neglected where he had so powerful a claim to grateful obedience. Unwilling to trust solely to his eloquence for keeping alive Novini's affection, the monk embraced the opportunity of one of his brethren's going to Palermo to send a message to Carlo, pressing his immediate return, and pointing out the consequences of disobedience. But Carlo, removed from the censorious observations of the count's friends, encouraged by the example of his fellow-

fellow-traveller, and liberally supplied with money by his too-generous protector, indulged in all the vices incident to a dissipated capital, and was loth to dash the cup of pleasure from his lips while its alluring zest remained. Had he known that Vignola was daily expected at Palermo, he would doubtless have acted with more circumspection.

That worthy man heard with the most lively satisfaction of Novini's unexpected restoration and security amidst the commotions of his country. A striking instance of Carlo's depravity having come to his knowledge, he thought the time was at length arrived to open the eyes of his deluded friend. With this intent he immediately wrote to Novini. After congratulating him on his brightening prospects, and informing him that it was with difficulty his son could be prevented from being himself the messenger, he added,

“ A circumstance has recently occurred here, which, I believe, will interest you, as one of our young countrymen is the hero of the piece. Being well supplied with money, this stranger every where received

ed a hearty welcome, until his immoral character displayed itself. He soon made a conspicuous figure among the dissolute extravagant youth of this capital. I understand he was a pretty constant visitor at the gaming-table, and particularly distinguished for his passion for the fair sex, and his talents for intrigue. Soon after his arrival he became intimate with one Signore Luzzi, a respectable gentleman lately settled at Palermo, whose hospitality he repaid by seducing the affections of his wife. His jealousy being at length excited, he retained his partner in close confinement, and ordered his doors to be shut against the stranger. Unfortunately, a few days afterwards, Luzzi was found assassinated near his own home. Suspicions unfavourable to the stranger were now propagated ; but the shameless widow, setting decency at defiance, appeared in public with her supposed paramour, ere her husband was well cold in his grave. They have since retreated from this place. Does not your indignation rise at this recital ? I know it must. What then will be your feelings when I charge you as an accessory

to

to the crime? Methinks I see you start at the horrid accusation! Yet nothing is more true. For oh! my dear and deluded friend, this stranger, this seducer, this murderer, I have every reason to suppose is no other than Carlo your adopted son! I shall be more particular when I shall have the happiness of a personal conference. This enjoyment will not, I trust, be much longer delayed, as the enemy will soon be compelled hastily to retreat from your neighbourhood, and I daily expect my happiness to be still farther increased by another pledge of conjugal love. Adieu."

At the same time Henri wrote to his beloved Laura. Every line breathed tenderness and regret at being still forced to suffer the torments of absence.

The count was greatly affected by Vignolo's intelligence. It destroyed at once all his long-cherished plans for the welfare of his family. Thinking it impossible for Carlo to have reached, at one bound, such a height of depravity, every thing he had heard to his prejudice rose before him, and appeared the progressive steps of his vicious career.

"I am

“I am afraid, reverend father,” said he, presenting the letter from Sicily to Niccolò, “that you have favoured Carlo against your better judgment. I begin to repent of having adopted him.”

Had a thunder-bolt have fallen at his feet, the monk could scarcely have been more astonished. Nor did his alarm abate as he rapidly ran over the contents, so fatal to his deep-laid schemes of aggrandizement.

“Oh, holy father,” said Novini, very opportunely for Niccolò, “I see you are almost overpowered by your indignation. What think you of your pupil? Have you nothing to offer in extenuation of his crime?”

“No, my son, far be it from me, a disciple of Christ, to defend the works of the Devil! Should this be true, in God’s name! reverse the steps you have taken in his favour. But still, my son, I think it my duty to caution you against indulging a rash resentment against this unhappy youth. In the midst of wrath remember mercy. And perhaps it will not be prudent to yield implicit credit to one who, pardon

pardon me, has, on many occasions, shewn himself unfriendly to Carlo."

" I am certain that Vignolo would not deceive me."

" I should hope not. Yet, remember, my son, your own admirable saying,— ' Human nature is of all fallible things the most fallible.' Peter himself, that zealous Apostle, denied his blessed Master. May not some private pique, or fear of your bounty to Carlo lessening the advantages he expected in his son's union with Laura, which, I am well assured, waits only your consent, have led your friend to exaggerate some youthful folly into a crime of the deepest dye? Besides, he does not say he himself saw Carlo at Palermo, but that he *has every reason to suppose* that he was the seducer, which marks the incertitude of his information. Nay, the letter itself, though it greatly resembles Vignolo's hand, may be a forgery of Carlo's enemies. However this may be, it is but consonant to justice to delay giving up for ever one whom you have so long loved, and who may be still deserving of your love, until he shall have an opportunity of

of repelling the accusation. Till then, injure not his character by making this report publicly known. Remember that virtuous and prudent sentiment, ‘ A whole life can scarcely re-produce the peace of mind which one rash moment may destroy !’

There appeared so much weight in what Niccolo so artfully advanced, that the count remained in great perplexity ; now inclining to doubt the authenticity of Vignolo’s information, and then yielding implicit credence to the guilty tale. Niccolo was too well acquainted with his character not to perceive the state of his mind, and availed himself to the full of the advantages Vignolo’s absence afforded.

The monk immediately informed his colleague of what had just passed, softening, however, the guilt imputed to Carlo into a mere youthful indiscretion.

“ I am glad,” said Lorenzo, “ that the crisis is at length arrived when we must either stand or fall. Should the worst ensue, I can still proceed to the New World. I shall first, however, do every thing in my power to promote my nephew’s welfare.”

“ No

"No time is then to be lost," replied Niccolo. "Whatever plan shall be adopted, in this exigency, must be executed before the arrival of that d——d vigilant tell-tale Vignolo. At his return, Carlo, for whose sake we have exposed ourselves to so much danger, for whose welfare we have been so anxious, will be doomed to beggary. And, as for ourselves—Oh, had my advice been followed, had the seducer of your sister been pushed into the grave, which has been so long yawning to receive him, we should now be without fear, and your nephew the Count di Novini. But it is not yet too late. Ere our enemy come we may—"

"Let us, if possible, avoid murder," said Lorenzo, hastily. "After forbearing so long, shall we now rush into such great danger without a certainty of being rewarded? Carlo, when raised to the summit of his ambition, may kick down the instrument of his elevation. The plan must, therefore, be so arranged as to give us a powerful check upon him in case he should prove ungrateful."

Such

“ Such a plan,” said Niccolo, “ is a defideratum, whose acquisition will, I fear, baffle our united powers.”

“ If we be baffled, I shall then reveal Carlo’s affinity, which may still procure him some favour. As for myself, I shall carve out my fortune in another hemisphere.”

“ By all means avoid such a disclosure,” said Niccolo, warmly. “ It is now imprudent; and, even at the worst, as you have no proof of the fact, the tale will be deemed the desperate resource of disappointed villainy to escape its due punishment.”

Each then retired to his cell, to meditate on the means of obviating the consequences likely to ensue from Vignolo’s arrival. Niccolo, ere he lay down, spent a few hours in examining some papers deposited in a private cabinet. He was about to close it, when the phial, which he had received from the Greek gardener, attracted his observation. He remained some time in profound meditation; then, striking his forehead, exclaimed, “ By Heaven! this may do,” and hastened to his confederate’s cell,

cell, although the morning was pretty far advanced. He rapidly disclosed his project.

"The execution will be attended with great difficulties," said Lorenzo, "and must be delayed till Carlo returns. Meantime you can prepare Novini for the undertaking."

"Oh, he will require little preparation. To attain certainty he will run considerable risk. I have great dependence upon his curiosity and fanciful romantic temper, which, I assure you, are far from being extinct."

Ernest conversation now ensued relative to this grand design. The morning-bell rang ere they had arranged the different operations, and put it, as they thought, out of the power of accident to prevent success.

The same morning, the French, after having been three months in possession of Naples, broke up their quarters, and retreated towards their own country. Upon pretence of congratulating his patron on the occasion, Niccolo made an early visit to the castle. The petty politics of the

times

times being exhausted, Carlo's misconduct again became the subject of serious discussion. The count confessed the enormity of the charge weakened his belief of Vignolo's representation; but added, that his friend, who was distinguished for his prudence and justice, would not have asserted so much without good foundation.

“ Oh !” exclaimed he, “ I would freely give a thousand crowns to know Carlo's real disposition. Your opinion, and you ought to know him, is favourable : my friend's, directly opposite. I wish he were come !”

To this emphatic wish, the monk could not so far master his feelings as to say “ Amen.”

“ Ah, my son,” replied the canting hypocrite, “ it is not given to mortals to discern the unclouded mind, to flash the pure light of virtue on the lurking seeds of guilt. Yet, I think, infallible means may be found to ascertain whether the bent of Carlo's mind be virtuous or vicious. Ha ! suppose, for this laudable purpose, you were to——But no, it is impossible ; you would never submit.”

“ Declare

“ Declare your self, good father. To obtain thorough conviction, I should not shrink from exposing myself to some danger.”

“ Why, my son, to me the end appears certain if you have strength and resolution to adopt the means.”

“ What means? Why thus tantalize me?”

“ Oh, my son, be not too sanguine in your expectations. It is merely a fugitive idea springing from a mind ever anxious for your welfare. It now appears romantic; impossible. Think no more of it.”

He now offered to depart, but the count, whose curiosity became more keen by the monk’s artful procrastinations, insisted on an immediate disclosure.

“ Well, my son,” said Niccolo, secretly pleased with his warmth, “ as you are so pressing, my crude conceptions are at your service. You will find the plan has no fault except the impossibility of execution. I designed to propose that, immediately on Carlo’s arrival, you should seem to have a sudden return of your late disorder, express your certainty of its having a fatal termination,

tion, and, by a proper instrument, declare Carlo your sole heir."

"All this may be easily done," said Novini, somewhat startled at the latter article. This did not escape Niccolo's watchful eye.

"True, my son," said he. "But here comes the difficulty, which we must pray to the Blessed Virgin to remove. It will be necessary that you shall appear really dead. How can we contrive that your death shall be credited through the family? Effect this, and you will soon have an opportunity of witnessing the true, undisguised temper of Carlo. The secret springs of his heart will lie open before you. If he be worthy of your benevolence, he will not take advantage of your liberality, but fully recompense your relations and friends who might suffer by your neglect. He will hold your memory in the greatest veneration, and have daily mass performed for the happiness of your soul. On the contrary, if he be the ungrateful, vicious wretch, as represented by your friend, he will not be able, or yet inclined to conceal it. He will then give a full flow to every inclination

tion of his corrupt heart ; perhaps expel your afflicted relatives from the castle, nay, may advance to such a pitch of wickedness, as to make your credulous fondness a theme of ridicule with his licentious companions. In that moment of fancied security you rise as it were from the grave, upbraid, in a voice of thunder, his villainy, and crush the ungrateful viper to the dust."

" Oh, the design is beautiful !" exclaimed Novini, feeling his adventurous spirit return, and eager to hold the balance of justice in a situation so admirably described by the monk. " It is comprehensive. It is certain. But the difficulty of counterfeiting death so as to avoid detection will I fear, be unsurmountable. My friends would send for a physician, and discover the deception at once."

Niccolo here observed that he could introduce, in that capacity, one of his brethren on whose fidelity might be placed entire confidence. He then charged him not to hint to any person whatsoever the subject of their discourse, lest it should come to Carlo's knowledge, promised to reflect more deeply on the means of

obviating every objection, and withdrew. He thought it imprudent to reveal, at that time, the whole of his deep design, lest the count should have suspected that it had been previously concerted.

Fortune seemed to favour the designs of the Confederates. The day after it was intimated to the count, Carlo, in consequence of Niccolo's mandate, returned to Naples. To the convent he immediately bent his way, in order to be fully informed why he had been so pressingly intreated to return. The contents of Vignolo's letter were now repeated to him, and he was highly censured for his criminal imprudence. The worthy youth, however, steadfastly denied the charge, that Niccolo himself was inclined to believe the report, if not false, was, at least, greatly exaggerated.

Ere he set off for the castle, he received very minute directions how to conduct himself towards the count and his family; but nothing of their nefarious project was disclosed.

## CHAP. XXVI.

*I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
And well plac'd words of glozing courtesy,  
Baited with reasons not unpleasible,  
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
And hug him into snares.*

MILTON.

CARLO was profuse in his congratulations on finding the count and his family had suffered so little injury, either in person or property, by the recent commotions. Novini made a very cold reply to his fawning civility, but eyed him with scrutinizing attention. Deeming his pale emaciated appearance a necessary consequence of his debauchery, and a corroboration of Vignolo's statement, he interrogated Carlo on the occasion of his long absence. The youth, unabashed, readily answered, "Illness."

"Well," thought Novini, "this accounts for his altered appearance. I suppose," added he, "the attractions of Sicily have had some share in withholding you so long from your friends?"

“ Attractions !” repeated Carlo. “ Sicily, dear father, I dislike above every place I have yet seen.”

“ How come you to have such an aversion to an island so generally allowed to be delightful ?”

“ The island itself is agreeable enough. But the morals of the inhabitants shed a gloom over its most pleasing prospects, and embitter its most delicious productions. Assassinations are there so common, they pass almost without notice. In the latter period of my disorder, one Signore Luzzi, my next door neighbour, as it were, was assassinated at his own threshold. Poor gentleman !”

Niccolo’s worthy pupil introduced this so naturally, and repeated it with so little emotion, that Novini, far from suspecting any artifice, became almost assured that his friend had been deceived. Further conversation ensued, but all tended to confirm this opinion.

Being, however, not free from doubt, he still resolved to put the virtue of his adopted son to the test, by prosecuting the design, partly projected by Niccolo.

That

That demure hypocrite again visited the castle on the evening of Carlo's arrival, to disclose the result of his profound deliberations since his late interview. He now said, that he believed he had discovered a method, which, if the count possessed adequate resolution and confidence, promised to remove the great difficulty of counterfeiting death with exactness.

"How, good father, is it possible?" exclaimed Novini eagerly.

"Attend, my son, and learn how Providence favours our design. You know I attended, as my sacred function required, on your old Greek florist, during his last illness. When he was at the point of death, he presented me a phial containing a liquid, the virtues of which, he said, were such, that one spoonful administered to any person would produce a heavy sleep resembling death, which would continue for twenty-four hours. Now, if you have courage to take the requisite quantity, your attendants may be effectually deceived."

"But only for twenty-four hours."

"No, my son, for a much longer period if you follow the path I have chalked out."

out. Some time before the opiate be administered, you may complain of a severe attack, and say you feel that you cannot long survive it. Then summon your relations, declare how you have bequeathed your fortune, and obtain their solemn promise, that immediately after your decease, they shall cause your body to be carried to the convent in order to be deposited before the altar, and have prayers offered up for the repose of your precious soul. You must also direct that two monks keep holy vigils all night near your body. These two, I will take care, shall be brother Lorenzo and myself. As soon as we shall be assured that our brethren are at rest, we will raise you from the coffin, and introduce you to an apartment where you may securely repose till the composition shall have ceased to operate."

"The plan appears indeed well arranged, holy father. Yet it *does* require resolution and confidence. Besides, I know not whether it be right to mock so solemn a situation as death."

"That be my concern. Consider our intention is to punish vice and reward virtue,

tue, and that I, a servant of the Blessed Virgin, have proposed it."

" Still I have another objection. I doubt whether the liquid itself be salutary. Nay, it may be poisonous, and I become in reality what I meant only to assume. May we not first try it on some of the domestics?"

" Impossible. Do not you perceive that when your insensibility shall afterwards occur, it will be deemed perfectly similar, and treated accordingly. But I am well assured of the simplicity of the composition. Would Alexis have dared to die with a lie in his mouth? Would I endanger the life of one to whom I am so much indebted? No, my son, if religion and gratitude did not forbid it, my interest would."

Novini, not yet satisfied, now proposed to give a small quantity of the liquid to a favourite greyhound which lay in his own room. This was agreed to, and instantly put in execution, though Niccolo feared its inefficacy on the brutal race. The experiment, however, removed his fears, and Novini's prudential scruples.

Every thing was now prepared for the last decisive stroke, except making a will in Carlo's favour, which, though not absolutely necessary, as he was the count's adopted heir, Niccolo, to avoid all future contention, thought proper to secure. Esteeming it a matter of form, Novini made no objection, and it was accordingly executed with all the formalities of legal exactness. He was very anxious that his honest domestic, Tomaso, should be admitted to an active share in their concerted operations. Unwilling to take such a step without the monk's approbation, he proposed to him, adding, at the same time, a just eulogium on his secrecy and attachment to his person, and that his services might prove of the utmost utility. The monk gave a decided negative to this proposal, saying Tomaso would, in all probability, reveal the truth to his wife; or, at least, to Laura and Beatrice in hopes of mitigating their sorrow.

“ Besides, you will also have a proof of *his* sincerity!”

“ His sincerity!” repeated Novini. “ I am as certain of that as it is possible to be of

of any circumstance in this changeful scene. He has always shewn himself interested in my welfare."

" But how he will conduct himself in your *adversity*, remains yet to be seen. I fear he will soon forget his benefactor, and *interest* himself only in favour of the rising sun."

" If he prove not faithful, fidelity, I again repeat it, is banished from among men."

" Well, my son, if events confirm this sentiment, I here give you my solemn promise to inform him, the morning after your pretended decease, of the whole affair, and request his assistance to convey you to a place of safety, where he may hourly acquaint you with the motions of Carlo."

" Do so, do so, good father," said the count, satisfied with this compromise, and placing the most perfect confidence in the monk's integrity, particularly as the will, which was made according to his directions, contained no article in favour of himself or convent.

On the morning previous to the time appointed for the execution of their roman-

tic project, the count complained of a severe pain at his heart, and repeatedly declared his firm persuasion of that day's terminating his miserable existence. The whole family was alarmed. Laura's agony at the bare supposition was unspeakable; but Beatrice was less affected, as she imputed the count's declaration solely to his melancholy hypochondriacal temperament.

For some days past, Tomaso's time had been wholly occupied in settling his family in their former dwelling, which they had relinquished on the enemy's approach to live in the castle. This circumstance, it is probable, prevented that curious domestic from making any inquiry, or exercising his inventive genius to discover the cause of Niccolo's long and frequent conferences with his master. Now, however, in the time of danger, he closely attended the count, and was very anxious for his recovery.

Lorenzo, as had been previously arranged, attended in a physical capacity; and the count gave express orders that no other should be admitted. The evening closed. Lorenzo stood ready to administer the opiate.

opiate. As the critical moment drew near, forebodings of an unhappy termination would at times intrude. Holding his honour engaged, he determined to persevere. Agreeably to their plan, he now desired his family to attend. Niccolo said he himself would go for Laura, and endeavour to prepare her mind for the melancholy catastrophe. Passing along the gallery, he heard Tomaso earnestly conversing with a person, to whose voice he was not accustomed. Apprehensive that Vignolo or Henri had arrived, he approached the apartment from whence the voices seemed issue. He was soon convinced his fears were groundless; but still he found himself unaccountably interested to know what subject engaged Tomaso's attention at such a momentous period.

“ Cannot I see the count di Novini ? ” said the stranger.

“ No, indeed, my ingenuous fellow. My poor master is so ill he is not able to look at it. But if you will leave it with me, I'll present it the very moment he can attend to it.”

“ Ha ! ”

“ Ha !” said Niccolo, “ this stranger, from his eagerness to see the count, is certainly a messenger with another letter from Vignolo,” and instantly entered the room. After a few interrogations, the monk, to his great satisfaction, discoverd the stranger was a young Florentine painter, who, having lost his patron, Lorenzo the magnificent, had recently arrived at Naples. Hearing there of Novini’s generosity and love of the arts, he had now brought a painting for his inspection.

“ Look, holy father,” cried Tomaso. “ Is it not like the very life ? This is none of your heathenish pieces. Here is neither Apollo, Venus, nor Jupiter. And why ? Because it is taken from the Holy Bible.”

“ His piety will be rewarded,” said Niccolo, glancing at the picture. He started on observing that the painter had depicted, with a glowing pencil, the scene in the garden where Peter cut off the ear of Malchus.

“ Ha !” said Tomaso, “ did not I tell you, aged father, how natural it is ? Had you been Malchus himself, you could hardly have been more astonished. How

the

the spears glitter ! What zeal is expressed in the blessed apostle's countenance ! There ! see Judas ! How like a traitor the villain looks ! To be sure, he appears to the worse advantage placed so near our mild and dignified Saviour. But see Malchus ! He gapes like a stuck pig. He is panic-struck, and hardly knows what is the matter. I wish I were as rich in money as philosophy, I should buy thee, if it were only for reminding me of another poor devil who, not far from this very spot, was served just such another trick. By the by, I'll tell you the story. A very curious one it is, as I could easily demonstrate."

The monk, by this time, found himself so interested that, notwithstanding the pressing business above stairs, he would not interrupt the tattling domestic. He remained in an attitude of eager attention. The painter, also, much pleased with the panegyric on his performance, said he should think himself highly gratified by the story. Tomaso, happy at having such willing auditors, and thinking his master was not in immediate danger, commenced his narrative with great spirit-

" You

“ You must know, good father, that, about fifteen years ago, I lived with one Father Paul, as nice a philosopher as you could wish to see on a summer’s day. Well! having occasion to send a trusty person to Naples on confidential business, he, because I loved logic and the seven sciences, pitched on me for the undertaking. The affair employed me for several days, during which I lodged with a poor widow woman, whose only child was grievously afflicted with the epilepsy. She had tried many medicines, but found no relief. While I was studying what could be done for the poor child, I recollect that I had once heard a great philosopher, who used to visit my master, say that the ~~Druids~~ cut the mistletoe at the sixth day of the moon, and esteemed it a sovereign remedy for several diseases, particularly fits of epilepsy, if it was not suffered to touch the ground after it was cut. Now, thought I, is the time to prove the truth of this by actual experiment. Luckily, the day following was the sixth day of the moon, and the last of my residing in the city. I went in the morning to search for the

the healing plant, and found some growing on a tree near a large house in the suburbs. I carefully noticed the place. As the evening closed I left my lodging, and hastened to the spot. Notwithstanding the darkness, I soon discovered the tree I had noticed in the morning. I climbed up, and remained with a sharp knife in my hand ready to cut the mistletoe when the moon shone full upon it, as I thought the plant would then possess the more virtue. Ere I was well seated among the branches I imagined I heard voices, which were almost instantly followed by heavy groans. I was on the point of leaping down to discover the cause, when a person stealing cautiously along prevented me. I watched him until a turn in the avenue concealed him from my view. I then slid softly down to observe his proceedings. Judge, holy father, my astonishment and horror, on perceiving him plunge a dagger into the breast of a gentleman lying on the ground at some distance from me! The moon being now up, I had a clear view of the whole. After committing the dreadful deed, he turned

about,

about, while I, by favour of the shade, regained my snug situation without being observed. I once thought of stabbing the villain as he repassed the tree; but, remembering an excellent logical saying of Father Paul, that the sword of the law ought only to execute justice, I determined not to send him to face his God with all his sins upon his head. I was however anxious to prevent his escape. Close to the tree passed the bloody monster. Down I darted upon him. 'Oh, murderous wretch!' cried I, 'Heaven eyes thee.' Then, holding my knife in my right hand, with my left I caught him by the ear, in this manner —'

Here the zealous narrator, eager to illustrate the tale by suitable action, placed his hand at the side of Niccolo's head. At this the astonished monk, whose feelings had been wound to the highest pitch, muttered,

"The deed shall be avenged," and rushed out of the room.

"What means the holy father's agitation?" said the painter.

Tomaso remained silent.

"He

"He was interested enough before," added the Florentine, "yet he leaves us at the very best of the story. But don't let his absence, my good friend, deprive me of the pleasure of hearing the remainder."

But Tomaso's love of story-telling had now given place to thoughtful taciturnity. Promising to satisfy the painter's curiosity at another opportunity, he, in great agitation, went to inquire after his beloved master.

On entering his chamber an affecting scene presented itself. One solitary taper shed a sickly gloom around. All was still, save when the half-restrained sobs of the afflicted family broke the solemn silence. Lorenzo with the important phial, stood on one side of the bed, and Niccolo, grasping a large crucifix, on the other. These awful preparations, so apt to make the stoutest heart tremble, Novini, confiding in the integrity of his spiritual director, beheld without emotion. Poor Tomaso was ready to sink with apprehension, and more than ever regretted that the discovery of Paradise still remained a desideratum. As he approached

approached the bed, he gave a scrutinizing glance at the monk, who, observing it, advanced to Lorenzo, and whispered,

“ Be quick! Our very existence depends upon it.”

Lorenzo nodded assent. The count now raised himself, and endeavoured to inspire his sorrowing relatives with resignation to the will of God. He then took leave of his domesticks, and desired them to serve his son with the same fidelity they had ever manifested for himself. As he tenderly pressed Tomaso’s hand,

“ Oh, my dear master!” cried the faithful creature, with tears in his eyes, “ I fear you are imposed——”

“ Cease,” said Lorenzo, sternly.

“ Would you disturb his dying moments?”

“ Begone!” added Niccolo. “ Art thou sent by Satan to withdraw this saint’s attention from his God?”

Beatrice, who since Vignolo’s departure, had corresponded with his lady, now withdrew to her study, and added the following morceau to a letter which she intended to dispatch to Sicily by the first conveyance.

“ For

“ For a moment I quit the chamber of death, to unite my soul, to mingle my ideas with thine. Oh, my sweet friend ! power flies me, imagination expires, I sink into oppressive languor, when I behold my dearest nephew writhing in the chains of anguish, and hear his hollow groans of misery vibrate in my ears ! I cannot finish the ghastly picture. My very heart weeps blood at the spectacle, and I turn from the image of death to pour out my briny tears into the susceptible bosom of friendship !”

Having finished this sentimental flourish, she returned to the “ chamber of death,” and arrived as her nephew was swallowing the soporific draught.

She enquired of Lorenzo if there were any hopes ?

“ No, Signora. That medicine is intended to smoothe his passage to the tomb. In less than an hour his miseries shall have terminated.”

Beatrice, who really loved her nephew, burst into tears. Carlo’s exclamations of grief might be heard all over the house. He rose in the opinion of all present save Tomaso, who justly imagined that, while

lamentations

lamentations flowed from his lips, joy revelled in his heart. But Laura's grief was not loquacious. Unable to articulate her feelings, she knelt by the side of her dying parent, affectionately pressing his hand to her lips, and bedewing it with tears. Novini was so much affected by her touching manner, that the Confederates every moment feared he would betray himself.

"My son," said Niccolo, significantly, "if you have any directions to give concerning your mortal, or immortal, part, let it be done while the Almighty allows you the power of execution."

"Yes, my friends, I have one request to urge. I feel as if your engaging to fulfil it were necessary to the repose of my soul."

"Oh, my dear nephew!" said Beatrice, "declare yourself. To refuse a request thus urged, would require hearts harder than the flinty rock."

All present assented to this sentiment, but none were so energetic in their approbation as Carlo.

"I am satisfied," said Novini. "To me it is important, but from you it requires

no

no sacrifice. All I request is, that, as soon as I shall be no more, my body be arrayed, by my worthy confessor, in the habit of his holy order, and conducted to the chapel of the Carthusian convent. Let a solemn requiem be chaunted for the repose of my soul, and two of the sacred fraternity watch all night by the corpse. To-morrow, privately convey my remains to the family burying-place, there to mingle with the dust of my worthier ancestors. To my dearly-beloved Carlo, I have bequeathed all my worldly goods. My will is placed in the middle drawer of my bureau. Open it immediately after my decease. Oh, my dear children! I feel my eyes heavy. Depart. Spare yourselves the pain of seeing your parent convulsed by the pangs of death."

"Oh, my father! my father!" cried Laura, wholly overcome.

"Murmur not," replied he faintly, "at the will of Heaven. I shall soon rise again."

He then fell back on the bed. Niccolo presented the crucifix to his lips, and pronounced the last absolution. Lorenzo then

then examined his patient, and declared life was extinct. A scene of great distress now ensued. Laura fainted away, and was borne to her chamber in a state of insensibility, by her sorrowing aunt and Tomafo. That worthy creature sobbed as if his heart would break, yet felt something like indignation at his master's having left all to Carlo, to the prejudice of his lovely daughter, and ancient relation. He believed he had been imposed upon by Niccolo's artifice, but dared not give vent to his conjectures. Leaving his young mistress to the care of her women, he, with a heavy heart, hastened to Bianca, ruminating by the way on the loss philosophy and the seven sciences had sustained, and the import of his master's dying words. Possessed with an opinion, which is by no means singular, that a person at the point of death often speaks by inspiration, he inferred that the sentence, "I shall soon rise again," foreboded the day of judgment to be at hand.

## CHAP. XXVII.

*For all this fame, I'll bide me hereabout;  
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*"On deeds like these we pause not till they're done."*

SCHILLER.

NONE of the principals of the family being able to attend, the task of fulfilling the count's dying request devolved on the artful colleagues. Being habited in the costume of one of the Carthusians, who had died the day before, he was borne to the chapel, and placed near the altar. Most of the domestics attended the ceremony, and among the rest Tomafò, who had equipped himself in a suit of mourning which he had worn at Marco's death. From Niccolo's conduct, during the repetition of the misleto story, he now suspected that all was not as it should be. His suspicions were, however, vague, and fixed upon no specific object. Desirous of ascertaining the truth, and to pay some respect to the memory of his dear master, he followed the procession into the chapel, with

with an intention of secreting himself to watch the motions of the Confederates.

The body, habited as it was, being laid in a coffin, and placed near the altar, holy tapers were lighted, and the solemn requiem commenced. Tomaso doubted not but his master was happy, yet he joined with his whole heart in the service for the repose of his soul. His fellow servants pressed forward to take a last look of their beloved master, but he dared not indulge his generous feelings, lest he should not be able afterwards to elude the vigilant eye of Niccolò. For some time, he lurked about in search of a secure hiding-place, but could find none to his satisfaction. The people, who had been attracted by the solemnity, now began to disperse, and he almost despaired of effecting his purpose. At length, no better place offering, he crushed his slender frame between two lofty tomb stones. From thence, with a slight movement of his head, he had a full view of the altar.

“Well,” thought he, “this is no bad place for conducting the experiment *secundum artem*. Ah, my poor master! you have

have bid a long farewell to all these things. You have nothing now to do with logic or any of the seven sciences!"

Wiping the tears from his eyes, he summoned his philosophy to his aid, and, with tolerable composure, awaited the event.

The superior being absent, the government of the convent devolved, *pro tempore*, to Niccolo. When the strangers had left the chapel, he informed his brethren that, from grateful respect for his sainted patron, he himself would watch by his cold remains, and that he had selected their brother Lorenzo as his companion in the holy vigil. Strictly enjoining them not to disturb him in the sacred work, till the bell rang for matins, he dismissed them to their respective cells. The artful Confederates continued their hypocritical chaunt until they believed all the fraternity were at rest. Niccolo then arofe. In his countenance were strikingly depicted gloomy solicitude, and settled resolution.

"Not a moment is to be lost," said he. "Help me to raise this credulous clod, this marrer of my fortune, this destroyer of your sister's honour."

VOL. II. BRUNOIS THE MURDERER. "Oh,  
mori!"

“ Oh,” returned Lorenzo, “ that word rekindles my revenge, and repels the pity I felt rising in my breast.”

He then proceeded to place the lifeless count on Niccolo’s shoulders, bidding him take care not to stumble lest he should awake.

“ He will not awaken these twelve hours at least. All I apprehend is detection from our brethren. I trust, however, we shall return before our absence can possibly be discovered.”

“ I have little fear on that account,” replied Lorenzo. “ They can have no suspicion that Novini is still living, or yet that——”

At these words, Tomaso, not daring to express his joy on discovering that his dear master might still cultivate the seven sciences, yet incapable of wholly retaining his composure, threw back his head in ecstasy, which striking against the tombstone, convinced him he had no room for his happiness, and alarmed the vigilant colleagues.

“ Whence comes that noise?” exclaimed Niccolo, stopping at the chapel door, and looking suspiciously around.

“ From

“ From nothing human, I dare say,” returned Lorenzo. “ Perhaps some rat, or other animal may have found its way to the chapel.”

“ Take a light and look among yonder monuments. If you find any person watching, instantly close his eyes in death.”

“ I’ll ferret him out,” said Lorenzo, snatching a light, and proceeding with a dagger in his hand to search among the tombs, fully determined to insure his own safety by sacrificing the intruder. Our poor philosopher gave up all for lost, when the light flashed against the neighbouring monuments, and, at length, penetrated even the obscurity of his retreat. He wished now for the claws of a mole, the wings of a bird, or the fangs of a lion ; but, alas ! sad necessity convinced him of the justness of his master’s conclusion, That man is, by nature, the weakest of all animals. Fortunately, however, for his experiment, Lorenzo was in haste, and not so exact in the scrutiny as his companion would probably have been. Tomaso was soon left in his former obscurity. He now held a short council with himself as to the plan

he should pursue in this critical conjuncture.

“ If I offer to alarm the convent, ere any one come to my assistance, these villains may destroy me. Or, if I succeed in resisting their united attacks till some one arrives, their devilish arts will probably bring themselves off, and make me the sacrifice. No, I’m determined cautiously to follow, and watch where they leave the body. Then, as soon as they turn their backs, I’ll bear my poor master from his long home to my home. By the Virgin! Laura will jump out of her wits for joy. Well might that serpent, Niccolo, hide his head, as the devil hides his hoof. Well might my master say, he should soon rise again.”

During this mental soliloquy, Lorenzo extinguished all the lights save one, and then softly followed his companion, leaving the chapel-door open. Tomaso instantly darted from his hiding-place and followed. Light were his steps. He hardly dared to breathe, lest he should be detected. His mourning dress was highly favourable to his design. The night being excessively dark, he was guided in the pursuit

suit more by the ear than the eye. With alarm he found the monks rapidly advanced towards the sea. Unable to develope their deep-laid plan, and doubting whether he had rightly understood their secret conference in the chapel, he imagined they were going to throw his master into the deep. Full of this distressing idea, he advanced nearer to the Confederates, determining, at the hazard of his life, to interpose for Novini's preservation. Reaching a bold projection of the shore, against which the waves beat with a sad and solemn sound, Lorenzo, now first breaking silence, said

“ Put him in !”

“ For the love of heaven !” cried Tomaso, rushing forward in great agitation, “ have mercy on my poor master ?”

“ Are we then betrayed ?” said the astonished Lorenzo. But soon recovering from his surprise, he caught the unfortunate intruder by the collar. Tomaso was going to shout for assistance, when his athletic antagonist violently interrupted him, “ Speak above your breath,” added he, “ and you die ! Who art thou that rushest thus on destruction ?”

“ One

“ One I know too well,” said Niccolo, leaping hastily from a boat, in which he had just deposited his insensible burden. He drew a dagger, and fled towards Tomaso, who would have paid dearly for his laudable curiosity, had not he been saved by Lorenzo’s holding the arm of his comrade.

“ Let this wretch live,” said he, “ until his death become necessary. His body may discover all.”

But Niccolo, in conformity with the poet’s sentiment,

He that is cruel must be bold in ills,  
And find his safety from the blood he spills,

exclaimed,

“ What! Shall this infernal meddling imp again escape my vengeance? One who was born for my bane.—One who struck from my grasp power, wealth, and honour, and doomed me to years of penury and disgrace. No, Lorenzo, I have sworn, that for the drops of blood I lost in the avenue, through his d——d impertinence, he shall bleed at every pore; and I will keep my oath.”

During

During this burst of passion, Tomafo, finding it impossible to escape, recommended his soul to God, dropt a tear for his deserted family, and awaited his fate with firmness. After a short parley, Niccolo found his companion so stedfast in protecting the honest domestic, that he consented that his life should, for the present, be saved, as time would not permit any farther opposition.

Both now fell upon our poor philosopher, who was now offering up a prayer for his wonderful escape. They violently gagged him, tied his hands behind, and threw him into the boat beside his master. Rain now began to fall in heavy drops. The arch plotter then turned Tomafo on his back, saying, with a sneer,

“ You are such a great philosopher and arithmetician, you may perhaps amuse yourself by studying the heavens, or counting how many drops fall into your mouth.”

Lorenzo did not interpose, his passions being awakened by an artful suggestion, that the sufferer might have been accessory to his sister’s ruin. The boat was now loosened from its station. Niccolo stood

at

at the helm, while Lorenzo vigorously plied the oar. For some time they flew swiftly along, keeping as near the shore as was consistent with safety. At length they guided it into a narrow creek, and moored it close to the rock. Whispering for a moment, one seized Tomaso by the head, and the other by the feet, and lifted him out of the boat. Could the poor fellow have spoken, he would have intreated them not to separate him from his dear master. He had formed a nice piece of logic for the occasion, which he flattered himself would prove irresistible. But, alas! the gag involved him in a dilemma, altogether inextricable. Though unable to discern whither they were bearing him, yet being still capable of forming inductions from due premises, he conjectured, from the bruises he received, that he was passing through narrow passages.

“ This is the place,” said Lorenzo, stopping.

“ Is it? Then lie there, thou meddling fiend!” cried Niccolo, throwing Tomaso on the ground.

A light

A light was now stricken, and the horrors of the place were fully disclosed. It appeared about eight feet square. The walls, formed of enormous stones, and partially covered with green mould, bore the marks of remote antiquity. Tomaso, shuddering, thought his last hour was come. The murmuring of the waves, which seemed at no great distance, increased his terror. A large block of granite rested in a corner; to this they fastened the unhappy experimentalist, and then silently withdrew, leaving him in utter darkness. After a short interval, he again heard their footsteps approach, and saw the light gleam through the path by which he himself had entered. In spite of every exertion, he could not stretch himself so far as to discover the motions of his enemies. But, imagining they had brought his master from the boat, and laid him in a neighbouring cell, he endeavoured to shout, but found himself incapable of uttering any articulate sound, and only incurred additional pain by the effort. Even the sound, which the gag still permitted him to make, seemed to him sur-

prisnly feeble, and cut off all hopes of being able to bring any boat, which might chance to sail that way, to his assistance. He was not so well acquainted with the *seven sciences*, as to know that this surprising diminution of sound was the natural effect of the damp and thick fog which surrounded him. He now imagined himself doomed to perish by the most cruel of all deaths, and gave himself up to despair.

Meantime the Confederates re-embarked, and soon doubled the point from whence they had departed. Mooring their boat in its former station, they ran towards the convent, where they were so fortunate as to arrive without being detected. Their brethren were still entranced by the drowsy god, and every thing appeared in the same situation as when they left the chapel. Still they were not secure. Should Novini's friends or relations wish to see the body, how was it possible to account for its absence? As, however, the count had solemnly requested that his funeral should speedily ensue, it was not probable that Laura and Beatrice would attain sufficient resolution to witness the ravages of death,  
ere

ere their beloved relative's interment. But the cautious Niccolo would not trust to this probability. From the grave he raised the deceased monk, whose habiliments had just disguised the hapless Novini. Reclothing him in his sacred habit, they placed him in the coffin.

"Now, Lorenzo," said he, "the dissimilarity of this body to that which we have engulphed in the rock, will not be attributed to our artifice, but to the transformation of dress, and the alteration which death makes in the human countenance."

"True," replied Lorenzo, who was relighting the sacred tapers. "But, consider, our brethren know Anselmo so well, that our detection may arise from that quarter."

More attentive to his speech than his employment, a lighted taper now dropt upon a kind of pall which covered the coffin. Where many steps are necessary to the attainment of a desired end, it is not, perhaps, possible for the most penetrating genius to connect every minute link in the long chain of operation, so as

to be proof against accident or misfortune. But to turn unforeseen difficulties, which promise to involve the plan in destruction, into the means of better accomplishing it, is the test of superior abilities. The grand artificer now displayed his superiority. When the pall was set on fire, Lorenzo, greatly alarmed, offered to extinguish it, but was prevented by his more subtle associate.

“ Hold !” cried he. “ This will obviate your inference. The flames, by disfiguring the body, will prevent our brethren from recognising their comrade, and Novini’s relations the object of their mourning.”

The pall was soon in a blaze. The coffin being uncovered, the flames speedily communicated to the habit of the dead Carthusian. All this Niccolo witnessed with a kind of gloomy tranquillity; no remorse as yet agonised his soul, so much were his feelings deadened by persevering so long in systematic villainy. But when the wood itself began to burn, he desired Lorenzo to summon his brethren to the chapel. Starting from their cells, they rushed

rushed in great affright to the altar. By a plentiful diffusion of holy water, the coffin was saved from destruction. All now eagerly inquired into the cause of this disaster. Niccolo was not unprepared for their interrogatories.

“ Oh, my brethren !” said the consummate hypocrite, “ we have passed such a night of wretchedness ! Strange noises, and spectre-like shapes have, from time to time, assailed us. But, thanks to the Holy Virgin ! we have baffled the designs of the arch fiend to deter us from our duty. Hearing ourselves repeatedly called on in a plaintive tone of voice, we believed some poor wretch was in deep distress. Leaving our holy employment, we ran out to offer relief, but found no one there. That moment of remission from our prayers was, doubtless, chosen by the enemy of mankind to effect his purpose ; as, ere we recommenced the sacred task, flames burst out, and spread with inconceivable rapidity over the receptacle of death. I, at first, imagined a spark had fallen upon the pall. But when I consider the anxiety of the deceased to receive immediate protection from

from our sacred habit, and this holy ground, I think his soul must have been polluted by some secret and horrid crime, and that he himself in his dying moments foresaw the dreadful consequences. Perhaps he had sold himself to the devil! The fire has been generated in the coffin. Would to Heaven it may not be an emblem of the fate of his disembodied spirit! Blessed Virgin protect us from the snares of Satan! Let no rumour of this wonderful event circulate in the neighbourhood. By scoffers at every religion, by heretics, it would be imputed to negligence or design, and might prevent the relations of the deceased from benefiting our convent, which, I am well assured, some of them intend. I rejoice that the body is to be buried this evening, as a longer continuance might endanger our chapel. Let the coffin be nailed up, and no person admitted to see the corpse unless I be present."

This was instantly performed. A fresh pall being laid over the coffin, the candles were re-lighted, and the solemn mummery was renewed. The monks, in general, were satisfied with Niccolo's ingenious explanation,

planation, and universally determined to observe his injunction of secrecy, knowing, from experience, that whatever disgrace should be incurred by an individual of their order, would be extended to every member by the indiscriminating multitude. Leaving Lorenzo in the chapel to give him notice if any person was particularly desirous of beholding the deceased, Niccolo withdrew to his couch, to acquire fresh vigour to put the finishing stroke to the grand operation.

While these events ensued at the convent, every inmate of the castle, excepting Carlo and his own domestic, was overcome with sorrow. Fancying himself secure in the possession of honour and fortune, the worthy heir, incapable of feeling one grateful sentiment for his benefactor, at once tore off the mask; and had not the decency to save appearances till Novini's interment.

The marquis di Polento, one of Carlo's licentious companions, hearing of the death of the count, and the tenor of his will, determined instantly to pay the disconsolate heir a visit of condolence. Being,

ing, however, distrustful of his own powers of removing sorrow, and knowing what application would agree with his patient's temperament, he put a dice-box into his pocket, called on a fellow debauchee, and two celebrated *bona robas* of Naples, and set off with them to the castle. Carlo received them with unaffected pleasure, and ordered a sumptuous entertainment to be immediately provided. His orders were issued in so magisterial a tone, that the astonished domestics, already disgusted with the upstart's disrespect to their beloved master, meditated a speedy removal. Had their spirited companion, Tomaso, been then at their head, it is probable his zeal, his logic, and *argumentum ad hominem*, would have effected an open rebellion. But, alas, he was in "durance vile."

Laura, thus suddenly deprived of her only parent and protector, indulged such an excessive sorrow as threatened a fatal termination. Unable to leave her bed, she was saved the pain of witnessing the unmerited treatment of her dear father's memory; and her woman had the sense and

and humanity to forbear aggravating her distress by repeating what she heard from her fellow servants. Beatrice, however, was not so fortunate in this respect as her niece. Her windows overlooked the garden. She was profoundly meditating on the transitory nature of human enjoyments, and secretly flattering herself that her works would preserve her name from the common fate of mortals, when a vociferous burst of laughter roused her from the not unpleasing reverie. Indignant at this profane interruption, she started up.

"Sweet sensibility," said she, "dwells not in the menial bosom, or the servants could not so soon revel in the paths of pleasure. But they shall be discharged. I hope Tomaso is not one of the Momus crew?"

She opened the casement in order to express her supreme displeasure. How great was her astonishment on perceiving this merriment proceeded from a party consisting of two gaudy flaunting females, two strangers, and Carlo! The loose carriage of the ladies, and the bold freedoms of their gallants, were singularly disgusting.

and

and alarming to her virgin delicacy. Surprise and indignation nearly overcame her.

“ Oh God !” cried she, while the deep blush of shame mantled her cheek, “ is it come to this ! For what hast thou permitted an evil spirit of delusion to infatuate my dear nephew, to decorate the vicious wretch with the honours of our house ?”

Without mentioning the subject to Laura, she went down in violent agitation to remonstrate against the indecency of such proceedings, and, if possible, to effect the removal of such shameless visitants. She burst upon them as they were re-entering the castle. In high-flown, but just, terms of indignation, she censured his levity. Nor were his companions spared.

“ Oh, my departed nephew ! hadst thou foreseen this ! Such profaneness will surely call thy perturbed spirit from the other world !”

“ If his spirit choose to come without a body,” replied the hardened Carlo, “ let it come.”

“ Impious, ungrateful monster ! The benefits conferred upon thee have, to thy barren

barren heart, been like the dews of Heaven falling upon a desart."

" Less acrimony, and more humility, would, perhaps, be more becoming your sex and situation. The count pleased himself by indulging his whims in my favour, and I please myself by flying from old prejudices."

" Ha ! my old boy," said his consoling friend, the marquis di Polento, laughing, and glancing significantly at Beatrice, " there still remains one queer old prejudice for you to relinquish."

" That may indeed be a difficult task," replied Carlo.

" Not so difficult," said Beatrice, who felt herself alluded to, " as it will be for you and your wretched companions to fly from the stings of conscience, which, be assured, shall one day rack your souls. Ere to-morrow's dawn, I and my niece, if she be able to remove, will depart for ever from this polluted abode."

" *You* may go as soon as you please," retorted Carlo, " but *Laura* is too precious to be entrusted to your protection."

For

For this stroke Beatrice was quite unprepared. She stood confused, and wholly incapable of coping with her malicious and too-powerful antagonist. The two ladies, observing this, recovered that confidence which the dignified tone of insulted virtue had at first repelled, and assailed the fair composer in a style of loose ribaldry.

“ Oh, Signora !” said one, “ let me advise you when you forsake this *polluted abode*, to travel to Circassia, and endeavour to recover your complexion.”

“ If she could discover Medea’s kettle,” said her *chere amie*, “ it might take a load of years from her shoulders. Meantime, I advise you to stand out of the sun. Too much light exposes wrinkles.”

Beatrice deigned not to honour them with a reply. Contemptuously glancing at the company, she retreated to her chamber, fully assured that Laura and herself were involved in as much distress as any heroines recorded in romance. She intended immediately to inform Laura of Carlo’s threats and insulting behaviour, but, finding her asleep, she deferred that design.

“ Sleep

“ Sleep on, sweet innocent mourner!” said she. “ Sleep on, and forget, in the oblivious arms of Morpheus, thy unmerited sorrows! while I meditate on the means of escaping from this monster’s den.”

It now occurring that Tomaso’s inventive genius might prove of the utmost importance, she sent her woman to desire his attendance without delay. After a considerable absence, the confidante returned, and informed her mistress that, since the count’s death, none of the domestics had seen him, that he had not been at home all night, and that Bianca was in the greatest distress.

“ Mysterious Providence!” exclaimed Beatrice, “ for what am I reserved? In this exigency, every one deserts me. Ha! should Tomaso have deceived me; should he have taken to flight with the Vulcanian repository! No, it cannot be; yet I wish night were come, that the dark shades of doubt might be dispelled by the light of truth!”

She then went to the library, and spent some time in turning over the adventures of

of several celebrated heroines, in hopes their hair-breadth escapes, from brutal knights and fell enchanters, would sharpen her invention.

As Beatrice left the company below, the marquis said,

“ Is that spirited lady’s niece beautiful ?”

“ As an angel,” replied Carlo. “ You shall judge for yourself by and by. Meanwhile, let us toast her in a bumper.”

“ Agreed, agreed,” said the gentlemen.

Carlo then led the way to the banqueting-room. Sparkling goblets, filled with the richest wines of the country, now crowned the festive board, and “ Success to the heir of Novini !” went gayly round.

“ Come, my lads,” said Carlo, filling a brimmer, “ here’s Laura di Novini ! May she soon echo your generous sentiment !”

“ Ere I worship your idol,” said one of his guests, “ I wish to have proofs of her divinity.”

“ Well,” replied Carlo, “ although to fulfil my promise may raise up a dangerous rival, you shall see her.”

He then ordered one of the attendants to request Laura's presence, if she was able to attend. This order was hardly given, before another servant entered, and informed him that Niccolo wished immediately to see him on business of the utmost importance.

" His ideas of what is importance are, I doubt not, different from mine. I'm not in a preaching humour. Bid him call again."

" Oh, no," said the marquis, " admit him by all means. I warrant a bottle or two will relax his grave face. Should he begin with his *pater-noster*, he will end with *Dátemi da bévere!*"

" Aye, do, Carlo," rejoined his companion. It will be a good joke to send him reeling back to his prayers. As his patron's soul is now out of his reach, he will gladly take care of his *spirit*."

Carlo, however, refused compliance. Desiring them to make merry in his absence, he withdrew to an anti-chamber, and ordered Niccolo to attend. The artful priest bowed with great humility. He then uttered a warm panegyric on the virtues

tues of the deceased, and hoped his successor would tread in his footsteps. Though Carlo's impatience at this exordium convinced him that he retained no affection for his benefactor's memory, yet self-love whispered he might still be grateful for his own services. To put it to the proof, he informed Carlo, that, in consequence of the superior's intention of closing his days at Rome, he had come to solicit his interest to succeed him.

"Is this your important mission?" said Carlo, haughtily. "I thought you were come to point out the place where the count, during the late troubles, had concealed his treasures. Excuse me, father, I have company waiting."

"Do you then refuse to grant this small favour to one who has encountered so many difficulties to save you from just punishment; nay, who has made you what you are?"

"Ha! is it so? Then why so freely condemn your own workmanship?"

He was turning away abruptly, when Niccolo caught him by the arm.

"Stop!"

“ Stop !” cried he, with energy. “ Permit me to urge a claim which may change your disposition towards me ; a claim to your grateful reverence, hitherto confined to my own breast. The time of disclosure is now come.”

“ What mystery is this ? Explain yourself without farther preface ?”

“ I am your father !” said the monk, with solemn emphasis.

“ My father !” repeated the astonished heir, not at first mistrusting the assertion. But his belief was only momentary. The long train of deceptions glanced on his memory, and he relapsed into incredulity.

“ *Spiritual* father, you mean,” added he, with an insulting smile.

“ No, my son, your true and only parent.”

“ Ho ! my old fox, this fetch won’t do. How can I place faith in one whose conduct agrees so well with the proverb,

“ Con arte, ed inganno,  
Si vive mezzo l’anno :  
Con inganne, e con arte,  
Si vive l’altra parte \*.”

\* You live one half-year with deception and art ;  
With art and deception you live t’other part.

You surely forget you have not your filly patron now to deal with?"

" There you are mistaken. Know, to thy confusion, the count di Novini is still living."

" Good heavens ! is it possible ?" cried the crest-fallen Carlo.

" Yes, wretch, it is not only possible, but true. You have sealed your own destruction. His death was a mere feint to prove your affection, the sincerity of which he has suspected ever since he heard of your adventures in Sicily. I go to acquaint him with your unworthiness ; and you, count, and no count, may divest yourself of your borrowed honours. But I keep your company waiting. Go, entertain them for the last time. Mark me, for the last time. Be merry, if thou canst."

Carlo now abjectly intreated him to stop and explain. He stammered out an apology for his conduct, and hoped, if he were really his son, a father's resentment would not be carried so far as to involve him in everlasting ruin and disgrace. The wily Carthusian enjoyed the trembling culprit's confusion until he judged him to be sufficiently

sufficiently humbled, and ripe for his purpose. He then condescended to accept the offered apology, and to confer on the means of avoiding coming to an extremity. He briefly detailed such events of his past life as he could disclose with safety to himself, and developed the means which had been adopted to produce the late surprising occurrences.

Though doubting the veracity of Niccolo's assertions respecting his affinity, Carlo, without hesitation, expressed his perfect conviction thereof. Knowing, from the uniform tenor of the monk's life, that his virtue could not be easily offended, and that interest was his ruling passion, he now ventured to hint, that he would bestow half his fortune on any person who would secure to him the undisturbed possession of the remainder. This was a conclusion, which Niccolo himself intended to propose.

"I am that person," said he. "Do this, and Novini's temporary torpidity shall yield to eternal sleep."

Finding no better expedient to avoid utter ruin, Carlo acceded to the proposal. Hastening to his company, he informed

them that indispensable business required his immediate presence in the city, but that he should be happy to see them at any other period.

“ This business must be very pressing indeed,” said the marquis, “ which forces you from the delightful cubes, the exhilarating bowl, and the soul-transporting woman.”

“ By Jove!” added one of the ladies, who was displeased with his eulogium on Laura, “ he looks as dull and woe-begone, as if the count had risen from the dead.”

The company laughed. Carlo made no reply, but instantly set off with the triumphant monk to execute the required contract. His guests amused themselves in guessing the reasons of his departure, until their wine was finished; when, recollecting an old companion who lived a few miles further, they rolled off in high glee to finish their carousal.

The notary’s diligence being quickened by an handsome douceur, Niccolo was soon put in possession of the deed which entitled him to half of his credulous benefactor’s fortune. From a strange lapse of memory,

memory, no stipulation whatever was made in Lorenzo's favour. On their return, Carlo thought himself entitled to enquire who were privy to Novini's pretended decease, and where he was concealed. Niccolo, aware of the tendency of these enquiries, replied, that Lorenzo, whose own safety compelled him to secrecy, and Tomaso, who was then in confinement, and whose babbling there was a sure method of preventing, were the only persons who knew of the secret.

“Was Tomaso your accomplice?” inquired Carlo.

“Surely not. He discovered our plan by accident. Description cannot reveal the place of concealment. Nay, after a close inspection, you might not again discover it. At seven, attend at the narrow cliff, which is nearly on a line with our convent, and I will guide you to it. Arrived there our rights shall, in a few minutes, be secured beyond the reach of fate.”

With these words, he took leave of Carlo, and pursued his way to the convent, that he might join in the funeral solemnity of the pseudo-Novini.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

*"By Heaven! it is decreed! He falls! The powers above give the terrible nod of assent. His guardian angel sleeps, and vengeance is awake."*

SCHILLERS.

BIANCA, meanwhile, was inconsolable on account of her husband's absence. The first night her fears were repressed by the idea of Novini's sudden death having made Tomaso's presence at the castle indispensable. But when morning came, and she found that none of the domestics had seen him since his master's death, she apprehended some melancholy accident had prevented his return. She was standing by the road-side anxiously questioning every passenger concerning her husband's fate, when a female, far advanced in years, came slowly towards her. She was supported by a middle aged man, of a military appearance. Although emaciated by age, and clad in the squalid garb of poverty, the old woman was still venerable, and had the look of having seen better days. She begged

begged Bianca, for the love of God, to suffer her to rest in the house, being wholly overcome by the fatigue of a long journey. This request was granted with the utmost cordiality. In administering to the wants of others, Bianca forgot, for a moment, her own sorrows. Her hospitable board was spread before the travellers. When the old woman was somewhat refreshed, she inquired with great tenderness into the cause of that distress, which the countenance of her young hostess so strikingly expressed.

“ Alas !” replied Bianca, weeping, “ I have a double cause of sorrow. My old master is dead, and I fear some dreadful accident has befallen my beloved husband.”

“ Trust in our Holy Mother,” said the tired traveller. “ In every distress she has proved my succour, and, God knows ! I have had my share—Who was your master ?”

“ The count di Novini.”

“ What say you !” cried the old woman, excessively agitated. “ The count di Novini ! Christo Benedetto ! My woes will surely terminate when that monster is summoned

moned before the judgment-seat of God. Do you weep for him ; a villain who ruined my poor child, who deprived me of my brave nephew, and who brings my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave ?”

“ Oh, good woman, you must be mis-taken. There was none like him for goodness in the whole neighbourhood. Had he been the monster you describe, my dear lost husband would not have continued so many years in his service.”

“ So many years !” repeated the stranger. “ Is Ludovico, the count’s vile accomplice, your husband ?”

“ No.”

“ For that blessing, be thankful to Heaven—Were you informed of what I have suffered through his means, you would acknowledge I have reason, ample reason, to curse the name of Novini.”

The soldier, who appeared interested in what his fellow-traveller had just said, now requested her to favour him with the recital of her distress. Bianca, wishing to know the reason of the reproaches, so liberally thrown out against her old master, made no objection to this proposal, and the old woman began as follows :

“ Though

“ Though now a poor forlorn outcast, my family is honourable, and, some years ago, was wealthy and respectable. By various disasters, unnecessary here to enumerate, my only brother was despoiled of all the property which he inherited from his parents. Misfortunes increased so fast, that himself and wife perished in the struggle, leaving a son and daughter entirely destitute. At this period I resided in a country village, supporting myself on a small patrimony bequeathed by a distant relation. I sheltered the poor deserted orphans, determining to supply, to the best of my abilities, the place of their parents: Juliet, the younger, was peculiarly my favourite. No mother ever loved a child so well as I loved her. She enlivened my solitude, and became as it were necessary to my existence. Nor was my love unreturned. Her assiduity to please, her affectionate endearments, her contented seclusion when I was confined by sickness, gave rich promise of what I might expect when my declining years should demand a return. But, alas! I exist, and the sweet cheerer of my soul is lost to me for ever!

Her brother possessed a bold and ardent spirit, and was far beyond my power to manage. The stillness of a country life suited not his disposition, and I often thought he regretted the loss of his former prospects. With the laudable intention of increasing our comforts, he at length departed from the village in search of employment. After an absence of some months he returned with a considerable sum, which I believed was the reward of his labour. But still he was not happy. Oh, that he had been content to eat the bread of peace in our humble dwelling! then we might have escaped the storm which has since annihilated our hopes. He again left us. We now saw him only twice or thrice a year, when he came to visit his sister, whom he treated with the utmost affection. Nothing in his power to procure she wanted. Unfortunately, while my nephew was absent, a nobleman, as he was passing through the village, fell suddenly ill. It being thought hazardous for him to continue his journey, he was led into my house. Sympathising with his distress, Juliet and myself were unremitting in our attentions

attentions to the stranger, of whose rank we were then ignorant. Alas ! how far was I from imagining that we had invited a serpent into our paradise, to poison all its sweets ! Excuse my relating the steps which led to the fatal return for our hospitality. Suffice it to say, my poor child, unsuspecting of guile, fell a sacrifice to the lustful arts of that monster, count di Novini. The unhappy victim carefully concealed her ruin, till her situation rendered a disclosure unavoidable. But the villain was then gone. At his departure, she said, he declared his name and title, and vowed speedily to return, and elevate her to his own rank. I instantly wrote to him, reminding him of his promise, and pointing out the fatal consequences likely to attend his treachery, but received no answer. The miserable girl, finding herself neglected, and fearing the face of her brother, whose return was daily expected, made rapid approaches to the grave. In giving birth to a son, she expired. To increase my distress, while my dear Juliet lay dead before me, her brother, unacquainted with the dreadful event, burst into the room. Good God !

God ! I shall never forget that agonising moment. He appeared stunned by the shock, then throwing himself by the side of his sister, burst into tears. It now becoming necessary to account for the melancholy spectacle, I related the events which had taken place in his absence. Ere I concluded, he started up in a transport of fury, imprecated vengeance on the destroyer of his beloved sister, and rushed out of the house, leaving me immersed in the deepest sorrow, and trembling for his safety. Immediately after the interment of my unhappy niece I retired to another part of the country, lest the child should be claimed by its unfeeling parent, and made as wicked as himself. All places were then alike to one, whose dearest connexions were rent asunder. When I again beheld my nephew, which was not till a considerable time afterwards, I inquired for Novini, and hoped he had not his death to answer for. He said the wretch was still living, and desired me never to repeat his detested name in his presence. Meantime the child throve very fast, and my affection for him daily increased. At first,

my

my nephew could not endure him, but as his resentment against Novini became less keen, he took a greater interest in the child's welfare. I had little reason to rejoice at this change, as, under pretence of undertaking the child's education, he, not long afterwards, deprived me of its company. I have never seen the boy since. I now led a very solitary life. Time, and the hopes of a better world, reconciled me, however, to my lot. I thought my days would now have closed in peace; but our village was lately entered by the enemy, my dwelling burnt to the ground, and myself, hardly able to crawl, turned away destitute. Having reason to believe my nephew resided in the neighbourhood of Naples, I determined to go in search of him. Thus far have I journeyed. A few hours ago I met with this soldier, who—”

Here the portrait, which Lorenzo had dropped when Tomaso was pursuing him into the recess, and which Beatrice had recently presented to Bianca in reward for her services, attracted the old woman's observation.

“ What

God ! I shall never forget that agonising moment. He appeared stunned by the shock, then throwing himself by the side of his sister, burst into tears. It now becoming necessary to account for the melancholy spectacle, I related the events which had taken place in his absence. Ere I concluded, he started up in a transport of fury, imprecated vengeance on the destroyer of his beloved sister, and rushed out of the house, leaving me immersed in the deepest sorrow, and trembling for his safety. Immediately after the interment of my unhappy niece I retired to another part of the country, lest the child should be claimed by its unfeeling parent, and made as wicked as himself. All places were then alike to one, whose dearest connexions were rent asunder. When I again beheld my nephew, which was not till a considerable time afterwards, I inquired for Novini, and hoped he had not his death to answer for. He said the wretch was still living, and desired me never to repeat his detested name in his presence. Meantime the child throve very fast, and my affection for him daily increased. At first,

my

my nephew could not endure him, but as his resentment against Novini became less keen, he took a greater interest in the child's welfare. I had little reason to rejoice at this change, as, under pretence of undertaking the child's education, he, not long afterwards, deprived me of its company. I have never seen the boy since. I now led a very solitary life. Time, and the hopes of a better world, reconciled me, however, to my lot. I thought my days would now have closed in peace; but our village was lately entered by the enemy, my dwelling burnt to the ground, and myself, hardly able to crawl, turned away destitute. Having reason to believe my nephew resided in the neighbourhood of Naples, I determined to go in search of him. Thus far have I journeyed. A few hours ago I met with this soldier, who—”

Here the portrait, which Lorenzo had dropped when Tomaso was pursuing him into the recess, and which Beatrice had recently presented to Bianca in reward for her services, attracted the old woman's observation.

“ What

“ What do I behold ! ” cried she. “ How came you by that well-known resemblance ? Speak, I conjure you.”

Bianca, much surprised, briefly related all she had heard concerning it. The soldier, who had listened thus far in silence, now said the picture was well known to him, and also the beautiful original.

“ Beautiful indeed ! Did you know my Juliet ? Perhaps,” added she, looking fearfully in his face, “ you were the accomplice of the villain Novini ? ”

At this moment, Lorenzo, anxious to discover whether Bianca entertained those suspicions, which had influenced her husband to conceal himself in the chapel, made his appearance at the door, which was half open. The old woman’s interrogations startled him ; but slight was his surprise, compared to that which their farther discourse produced.

“ Ah, my good dame,” replied the soldier, “ you have been miserably deceived. The count di Novini was innocent of the crime which you accuse him of. My master was Juliet’s seducer. He abhorred Novini, who had robbed him of his mis-  
tres.

tress. He therefore assumed the name of his successful rival, in hopes he would fall by the mistaken vengeance of Juliet's brother."

"Oh, the Blessed Virgin! What treachery! You are then Ludovico?"

"I am."

"Ah, thou——But repentance may have cancelled thy crime. Who was your diabolical master?"

"One Gonsalvo di Rizambo, a nobleman of——"

"Great God of Heaven!" cried Lorenzo, rushing impetuously forward, and striking all present with astonishment. The old woman, as if the voice had called some well-known friend to her recollection, looked wistfully at the Carthusian.

"Gracious Providence!" exclaimed she. "It must be my long-lost nephew," and threw herself into his arms. Tears of joy ran down her withered cheeks, while she blessed the happy moment of their reunion, and eagerly inquired for her dear boy.

Distracted by the various passions which now assailed him, Lorenzo could not return

turn

turn her warm embrace. He appeared as if meditating some dreadful purpose. Every manly and virtuous feeling was wounded to find that he had been the credulous dupe of his sister's destroyer, and that he had sacrificed his principles; and, in a great degree, his independence, to gratify that monster's avarice, ambition, vengeance, and lust. Knowing that his intriguing associate had had a long conference with Carlo, he believed that the secret of their affinity was disclosed, and that, after sacrificing the prisoners confined in the recess, his own turn would arrive.

“ Yes,” cried he, starting up, “ I know too much of his diabolical plans to be suffered to escape. But by Heaven! the artful monster shall now expiate his crimes in death. First, however, let me expiate my own, by rescuing Innocence from the jaws of Ruin.”

Camilla Daruzzi, for such was the old woman, stood amazed at the vehemence of his mysterious exclamations, and was inclined to believe their sudden meeting had deranged his mind. Lorenzo observed

ed her concern, but the business he had in view was too pressing to admit of an immediate explanation. He desired her to repose herself till he returned, and assured her she should soon embrace her nephew; then beckoning Ludovico, he left the room. At first he intended instantly to proceed to the convent, and immolate the fiend-hearted monk to his just resentment, but reflecting that if himself should fall, his aged kinswoman would be left destitute, and the count and his faithful domestic exposed to the most miserable of all deaths, he determined to engage the soldier to accompany him to the place of seclusion, and there to await the denouement. By representing to him that justice demanded atonement for his having assisted in the villainous deception, and that the restored count would liberally reward his efforts, he gained Ludovico's consent. Desiring him to remain there a moment, he ran to the castle to inquire if Carlo was at home, and was informed that he had been some time absent with father Niccolo.

“ ‘Tis as I feared,” thought he, “ the fiends are on the wing.” Breathless with apprehension,

apprehension he returned to Ludovico. "Away!" cried he, "not a moment must be lost. Ere we can arrive, the work of death may be completed!"

As they approached the place where the count and Tomaso were confined, Ludovico shuddered at the horrid aspect of the surrounding scenery, which seemed so suitable for the rites of witchery, that he every instant expected to behold something supernatural. The utmost exertion of Lorenzo's eloquence was now necessary to induce him to enter a narrow inlet, which he pointed out. A present of a golden cross overcame his scrupulous fears, as a boat containing two figures, which Lorenzo judged were the monk and his pupil, came in view.

"Heaven be praised!" said he, "The villains are anticipated."

Well acquainted with every turning, he soon reached the vault, and, to his great satisfaction, found Novini was recovering from the effects of the opiate. Frequent were his exclamations, and complaints of father Niccolo's absence. Lorenzo made no answer, but stole softly along, leading the

the soldier by the hand. Thick heavy darkness concealed every object ; Lorenzo, for obvious reasons, not yet suffering the light to appear from a dark lanthorn which he had provided. A slight noise in the passages indicating the approach of other visitants, Lorenzo placed his companion in a deep arch way, and, enjoining him silence, awaited their entrance in inconceivable anxiety. A desire of knowing the extent of the monk's machinations, and how far Carlo partook of his guilt, prevented the stroke of immediate vengeance. Niccolo now entered, followed by Carlo bearing a lantern. Lorenzo trembled as the light glanced on his abhorred visage. Priming a pistol, which he had procured from Ludovico, he stood ready for the decisive moment of retribution.

Novini first broke silence.

" Ah, good father!" said he, " why have you been so long absent ? Is my family well ? Is Carlo grateful ? Good God !" added he, glancing round, " What a dreadful place ! Is this the convent dungeon ?"

The

The monk made no reply. He surveyed his deluded victim in gloomy silence, as if watching the point where he might inflict the severest pang.

"What mean you?" continued the count, in a tone of extreme solicitude, "Why look you so? You promised to leave me in a place from whence I might view the motions of Carlo."

"And I have kept my word," replied the perfidious impostor, with a malignant smile, as he placed Carlo before him. "Behold him! Behold your worthy heir, and my son!"

"Am I then betrayed? And by you too? Ah! I now fear you are the serpent my beloved Maddalena bade me expel from my bosom. Yet, surely, gratitude——"

"Gratitude! For what? For depriving me of Maddalena, of fame, of fortune, of every thing which renders life desirable? The gratitude I feel for *such* favours shall be repaid by this," drawing a dagger from his vest, and throwing back his cowl as he spoke.

The

The tenor of his words, and the open display of his features, not artfully demure,

“ Deep malice to conceal, couch’d with revenge,”  
but rendered by passion more like his former self, flashed the dreadful truth on Novini.

“ Merciful God ! Rizambo !” exclaimed he, fixing his eyes wildly on the monk.

“ Oh, Carlo ! save me !”

“ Carlo knows his duty better. He is my son, and your heir. Are you credulous ? Did not one Daruzzi charge you with the seduction of her child ? I was the seducer, and Carlo, your adopted son, your sole heir, is the fruit of—”

“ Perdition seize thee for a villain !” cried the count, attempting to rush on his triumphant adversary ; but his enfeebled frame could not second the impulses of his indignation.

“ Ha ! if thou art distressed because thine own hand has given to my child the fortune of your noble ancestors, will it not sting thy soul to madness to know that my hand shall compel Laura, thine only child, to yield to his embraces ?”

The

The count groaned in agony, but would not gratify his insulting enemy by imploring mercy.

“Now,” added Rizambo, advancing nearer, “thou shalt cease to rail against the miseries of life. Prepare thyself. It now comes home. Revenge triumphs.”

“It does, by Heaven!” shouted Lorenzo, rushing forward, and firing his pistol. The aim was sure. The ball entered Rizambo’s left side, and he fell to the ground.

“God be praised!” said Lorenzo, “Your arts are at length detected, and turned upon your own head. This worthy Signore, whose pardon I now implore, will, I hope, live to bless his family.”

Ludovico, meanwhile, seized Carlo; but that artful youth, seeing the unexpected catastrophe, watched his opportunity, and by a sudden exertion liberated himself and fled. Tomaso was now released from his painful situation, and conducted to Novini. Having imagined that the firing of the pistol was the signal of his master’s death, the poor fellow was almost out of his wits with joy to find him still living. Never was his presence more welcome to the

the count, who, although he saw his principal enemy overcome, was not without apprehensions from his companions.

“Lead me from this horrid place,” said he. “And if life still remain in that wretched object, let some good priest be sent for, that he may endeavour to make his peace with God.”

“First make thine own!” retorted the monk. Ere his purpose could be foreseen, he furiously started up, and plunged his dagger into Novini’s bosom.

“Oh, devil! devil!” said the zealous domestic. Snatching a poniard from the soldier, he flew on the hardened fiend, and by repeated stabs dispatched his polluted soul to its native hell. The blood spouted from Novini’s wound.

“I die!” said he, faintly. “Where is my Laura?”

“Live, my dear master, live! All your enemies are dead, and I am living. We may yet be happier than ever.”

To this well-meant effusion, the count made no answer. His eyes closed. He sunk the image of death on the breast of his faithful servant.

“Ah,

" Ah, Heavens! He is dead!" said Tomaso, making the place resound with his lamentations.

Lorenzo, more collected, now proposed to convey Novini home, and to procure surgical assistance. As for Rizambo, not one would contaminate himself by touching him.

" Let one reptile prey upon another," said Lorenzo.

" A very good observation," replied Tomaso. " But still it is a pity.

" How?"

" That he did not die sooner."

Their retreat was not effected without great difficulty; as the narrow passages made it necessary, at every turning, to place the unfortunate count upon his feet. As they bore him homeward, the fresh air seemed to revive him, and hope rose once more in Tomaso's bosom. That faithful creature, amidst all his distresses, had never forgotten his dear Bianca. All his philosophy could not restrain him from turning aside to prove whether his presence would restore tranquillity to his family. The present experiment succeeded. Embracing his delighted

delighted wife and children, and promising to account for every thing at his return, he followed his master to the castle. The count being desirous of beholding his daughter, Tomaso undertook the tender office of informing her of the late events. When she understood her father was still living, she started from her lethargy, and flew wildly to Novini's chamber.

"Oh, my father!" cried she; then, gasping for breath, fell senseless at his feet.

When she again opened her eyes, a new scene presented itself. Vignolo and Beatrice were watching the changes in her dying father's countenance, while her belovèd Henri, kneeling, was bedewing her hands with his tears, and endeavouring to hasten her recovery. She gazed around, as if doubting the reality of the scene. Henri, in a few words, informed her that they had just landed at Naples, when, hearing of her father's decease, they had instantly set off to offer her their protection.

The last hours of Novini rapidly approached. His fortitude and resignation were not, at this awful crisis, less conspicuous

than when he encountered only the semblance of death.

“ Oh God !” cried he, with unaffected fervour, pardon my murmurs at thy dispensations. I am punished, yet still justice and mercy mingle with thy chastisements. Thou sufferest me to die in the arms of my daughter and my friend. Weep not for me. Rather rejoice that a life of anguish is, I trust, through the merits of our Redeemer, about to yield to endless felicity.”

He now desired to see Carlo, as was supposed, to assure him of his forgiveness; but he was not to be found. He thanked Lorenzo for his important succour, warmly urged him to repent, and recommended him to the protection of his friends. His affectionate farewell of Tomaso, it is impossible to describe. Joining the hands of Laura and Henri, he blessed them, and expired ere the surgeon arrived. In a transport of sorrow Laura threw herself on the body, and kissed his pale lips. “ Almighty God !” said she, fervently, “ never more shall thy lips bless me ! never more shall thine eyes beat fondness on thy child !”

“ Nor

"Nor yet," replied Henri, "shall they evince his suffering. His melancholy complaints, the fixed look of despair, are no more. Let that comfort thee."

"Peace be with his soul!" said Vignolo, advancing to lead Laura from the house of mourning.

### CHAP. XXIX.

"*Ne parlons que de joie.*"

RACINE.

"*The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.*"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Carthusians were thrown into the utmost perplexity, when Vignolo informed them of Novini's decease, and desired them to prepare for the celebration of his interment. They knew the character of Vignolo too well, to suspect that he de-

signed to ridicule their holy order ; yet it was strange, passing strange, to request them to bury a man twice over. The unusual absence of brothers Niccolo and Lorenzo made them, however, imagine there was some mystery which they could not as yet elucidate. Their first step was to examine the contents of the coffin, buried the preceding evening. Vignolo accompanied them in the search. Suspicion being now thoroughly roused, the body, notwithstanding Niccolo's artful manœuvres, was identified. Various and contradictory were the reasons assigned by the monks for this metamorphosis. The generality referred all to the machinations of the devil, who, they alledged, retained a peculiar enmity to their holy order, on account of its superior sanctity. A conclusion, as distinguished for humility and piety, as wisdom and justice. All remembered Niccolo's dreadful story relative to the interruptions of Satan during the holy vigil, all had seen the count when first brought to the chapel, and none could discover how it was possible for the fugitives to be benefited

benefited by such a change, much less how they contrived to convey Novini back to the castle. So, according to Tomaso's logic, as the body could not return by itself, as Niccolo and Lorenzo had not assisted its flight, and as none of the brethren knew how it was done, ergo, his infernal highness must have been the prime contriver.

Vignolo, distressed as he was, could not forbear smiling at their absurd explanations, but did not think it prudent to present them the clue to the mysterious labyrinth of conjecture. That same night, the remains of Novini were privately interred in the family vault.

Ludovico, being presented with a considerable sum, set off to join his detachment, and was never more heard of. His absence gratified Lorenzo, who, having laid aside the habit of his order, remained secluded in the castle lest he should be recognised by his late associates. But they were so very cool in their inquiries that he ran no risk of detection. This indifference arose either from a belief of their deaths,

or

or from having discovered the secret hoard which Lorenzo and Niccolo had provided in case of any exigency. The former is, however, the more probable supposition, as having taken the vows of poverty, their only object would be a treasure in heaven.

Soon after Novini's death, Tomaso was summoned by the fair composer to attend her to the ruins, in order to re-convey the *vulcanian repository* to the *seat of heavenly musing*. Their nocturnal expedition was conducted with the same secrecy as before, but, remembering her former disaster, she did not require an oath for the preservation of her virgin delicacy. Tomaso was, however, in expectation of it, and had accordingly provided himself with a stout rope which, he offered to prove by actual experiment before they set out, was the best thing ever invented to draw a person out of a ditch!

The deplorable situation in which the count returned to his family, had so entirely occupied their attention, that the will in Carlo's favour was not adverted to in time to be remedied. To the generous Henri,

this

this omission gave not one moment's concern. Virtuous love had purified his heart from every baser passion. His father was less indifferent. He regretted his not arriving in time to prevent a proceeding so injurious and unjust. But his regret did not arise either from disappointed avarice, or ambition. Unswayed by passion, extending his views far beyond the present moment, he believed that ages might not repair the mischief which such a fortune would enable the vicious Carlo to produce. The heir did not however appear, and though every method, likely to discover his retreat, was employed, no certain intelligence of his fate was procured.

One day, Tomaso, who was ever on the watch, came in great haste to Vignolo, and informed him that some fishermen of Naples had found a body, which appeared to be of superior rank.

" If this be Carlo," said he, " I can easily prove why he never came to claim his estate. As deep as he was, I fancy he found the sea too deep for him. Ah, Signor, had it not been for him, my good master

master might have long studied philosophy."

Tears ran down his cheeks as he spoke.

"True, my good fellow. But let us not repine at his happiness. Who knows but he is now studying a far grander philosophy than any this world can produce?"

"Well observed. Very well observed, indeed. Should that prove true, we may yet study together."

Lorenzo now came in, and was informed of the subject of their conversation. He instantly proposed going to examine the body; which being agreed to, the trio set out for the Harbour. They soon reached the place. A slight inspection of the body served to strengthen Tomaso's supposition. The face was too much disfigured to retain any resemblance, but his dress, particularly a vest which Laura, at her father's desire, had embroidered for him, removed every doubt. Observing several parts of the body discoloured, as if the effect of severe bruises, they imagined that, in his rapid retreat from the recess, he had entered a secret passage, and slipped into the sea.

sea. Although the rays of virtue never gilded one hour of his existence, although his death might be deemed advantageous to the general welfare of society, yet they could not behold, without shuddering, his mangled remains, nor think, without horror, of his rushing into eternity,

“ No reck’ning made, but sent to his account  
With all his imperfections on his head.”

Vignolo, as if from a sudden impulse of charity, left a sum sufficient to have the unhappy object interred in consecrated ground, and quitted the melancholy scene; not suffering the body to be claimed, lest it should revive unpleasant reflections. He also charged his companions to conceal, for a while, the fate of Carlo.

With the laudable design of confirming Lorenzo in his abhorrence of vice, while the miserable end of one of her most zealous votaries was still fresh in his remembrance, Vignolo observed that virtue, even in this world, brought its own reward, and vice its own punishment. “ Virtue,” said he, “ though hid in the deepest gloom,

may yet enjoy the pure sunshine of the soul, and, though exposed to death itself, may smile; whereas, to Vice, the light of heaven is as darkness. Fears hover o'er her festive board, and Conscience poisons her slumbers. Few schemes have ever been better arranged than that which has been so wonderfully overthrown. Disappointment seemed almost impossible."

"No such thing, Signore," said Tomaso. "Disappointment was certain. You forget that a murderer is always detected. Now, Rizambo killed his own brother. Ergo—"

"Ah, the inference is clear," replied Vignolo.

"So I think, Signore. I wish I had known that father Niccolo was that monster Rizambo. Till the other night, when I attempted to lay hold of his ear, I never suspected it. But when I hid myself in the chapel, the truth was demonstrated."

"But for your suspicions and courage," said Lorenzo, "every project of that villain would have been accomplished."

"I don't think that. It is no true logical conclusum. Primo, because it was the work

work of Providence. Secundo, because if I had not been chosen for the experiment, somebody else would."

"How came it," said Vignolo to Lorenzo, "that so close a connection subsisted between you and Rizambo, whom, doubtless, you knew to be the murderer of his brother?"

"To account for our guilty combination, requires a far distant retrospection."

"No matter. We have time enough for a long story, ere we rejoin our friends."

Lorenzo made no farther objection. After succinctly relating the primary disasters of his family, his disappointment in love, the seduction of his sister, and the fatal mistake which caused the due di Rizambo's assassination, he added,

"To avoid an ignominious death, Rizambo and myself, already connected in crime, were compelled to fly. With difficulty we saved ourselves from apprehension. The whole country was alarmed, and every man's hand against us. We dared not enter any village for refreshment, lest Rizambo's disfigured countenance should lead

to

to our detection. After many hair-breadth escapes, we reached the Apennines, when my companion, who had no other means of subsistence, entered our immortal band.

Our predatory excursions continued for some time with unexampled success, until a neighbouring state, incensed at our having plundered several carriages containing the public money, dispatched a strong body of troops for our apprehension. They had such good information, their measures were so prudently arranged, that one morning, at day break, the whole band was surrounded, and required to surrender at discretion. To conquer or die, being the only alternative, our brave captain drew up his men, and demanded, whether they chose to perish like heroes, in the field, or like criminals, on the gibbet?" 'Lead on! Lead on!' was the animated and universal reply. We instantly rushed on the enemy. The onset was irresistible. Every man fought as if victory depended on his single effort. Long and bloody was the conflict; but the enemy was not inspirited by those powerful motives which fired the meanest

meanest of our party. They fled in disorder, leaving us masters of the field. A defeat could hardly have been more fatal. Our intrepid leader was killed.; our most experienced officers and bravest men either shared the same fate, or were dangerously wounded. I escaped with a slight wound in the arm, but my companion was unhurt. To preserve the remnant of our band, we secured our most portable treasure, and traversed the whole extent of the Apennines. Being too feeble to execute any enterprise of moment, and deprived of our veteran captain, whose presence ever inspired confidence, nothing prospered we afterwards undertook. Our number daily diminished. Some entered the army, others returned to their former occupations ; and some few, either concerned for the salvation of their souls, or envious of the repose of a monastic life, threw themselves into the bosom of the church. Rizambo and I followed the latter example, but not wholly from the same motives. I thought of providing for my nephew, and my companion, doubtless, meditated vengeance

ance on his rival. Two of the band, who had formerly belonged to the Carthusian order, instructed us in their rules and discipline, and provided us with the necessary habit, previous to our setting out for a convent of their brethren, situated in the count di Novini's neighbourhood. This place was chosen by Rizambo, who plausibly alledged that the scenes, where he had passed his childish hours, possessed, for him, peculiar charms. When I urged his disfigured countenance as an objection to his plan, he replied, that his story would be forgotten, and that he should take care so completely to disguise himself as to escape detection. Pretending that we were the survivors of a fraternity of Carthusians, who had been recently massacred by a party of Turkish marauders, we were readily received. To have entered as novices, might have betrayed us."

" It was not without reason he so closely buried his head in a cowl," said Vignolo. " Alas ! it was next to impossible for my poor friend to recognise his ancient enemy disguised in the garb of sanctity, more

more particularly as he believed he was dead."

" Yet, Signore, never was a hypocrite so afraid of being unmasked. So much so, that for a considerable time he did not think his close cowl a sufficient concealment, but used to discolour his face with a certain composition. This practice, however, he at length omitted, and acquired even enough confidence to expose more of his countenance to observation."

He now recounted every occurrence which ensued after his joining the community, except the design against Maddalena, which he thought proper to conceal lest he should entirely lose the good opinion of Vignolo and his friends. He concluded by saying, that the scenes of hypocrisy he had witnessed in the convent, had given him a thorough aversion from the monastic life, and that he had come to a resolution of embarking in the next fleet which sailed for the new-discovered hemisphere. Vignolo, though from principle attached to the Romish church, had too much good sense to enforce the necessity

of

of his fulfilling his vows. He cautioned him to avoid the common error of reasoning from the abuse to the use of an institution, and promised to assist him in whatever profession he should choose; but, at the same time, intreated him to consider whether it was consistent with humanity to forsake his poor aged kinswoman.

“When you depart, she will be left desolate in the world. Hapless is that wretch who, far advanced in years, has survived all those who cherished his hopes and dispelled his fears. Such may be the fate of Camilla. To her will be lost the comfort age derives from rehearsing the family anecdotes of former times to an attentive ear, or from beholding herself renewed in your grateful offspring.”

Lorenzo, remembering his former disappointment, sighed at this last observation. After some consideration, he promised not to leave her while she lived. This was pleasing intelligence to Camilla. She was at first extremely unhappy at not meeting Carlo, but when fully informed of his depravity, ceased to regret his loss. She

daily

daily returned thanks to the Blessed Virgin for her nephew's restoration, and implored a blessing on the virtuous family of Novini.

Meantime Vignolo's friendly endeavours, and, above all, the tender attentions of her affectionate Henri, gradually chased sorrow from the heart of Laura. The sun of happiness once more arose in her gloomy horizon, and promised a long unclouded day. Tomaso, the experimental philosopher, ever held his master in grateful remembrance: their conversations and wonderful experiments, *secundum artem*, in the seven sciences, he loved to repeat to his children. He was always a welcome visitor at the castle, and treated on the footing of an old friend.

Within a few months after Novini's decease, Laura bestowed her hand on the transported Henri, who had not another wish remaining ungratified. Beatrice could not resist this happy opportunity to renew her invocation to the tuneful Nine. Desirous of gaining the applause of the critical Henri, and of evincing that age had

not

not extinguished the fire of genius, she took more than ordinary pains in the composition. The evening closed as she was completing the harmony of the last stanza. Unable to descend with her wonted ease and celerity, she preferred sending the piece to the enraptured pair by her woman, first sealing it, that it might not be profaned by menial optics.

Whether the young couple were not poetically inclined, or were engrossed by a more pleasing employment, is, at this distance of time, impossible to ascertain with that accuracy such an important affair requires: it is, however, certain, the seal was not broken till the following morning, when Henri, with one arm encircling Laura's neck, perused poor Beatrice's

## SONNET.

Ere the radiant god of day  
 The rising rose emblooms;  
 Or zephyrs, borne on wings of May,  
 Soft shed their rich perfums;  
 On every stem sharp thorns arise,  
 And, wrapt in night, each colour lies.



Life,

Life, thus, ere dawn upon the soul  
True friendship's steadfast charms,  
Ere those sweet nameless transports roll,  
Love feels in beauty's arms,  
  
Brings forth, as well you know,  
Affliction's fest'ring thorn :  
May you e'er feel the blissful glow,  
Of love and virtue born !

F I N I S .

٢٥٣

## ЛІВІЙСЬКІ ТІВІОВІ

Dieß soll noch etwas vorliegen, um  
daraus fließend ein Bild von der  
der strengsten Form der Form, von der  
amis aufzufinden ist.



